TOLSTOY ON ART

L. N. TOLSTOY and A. P. CHEKHOV

At Gaspra, in the Crimea, during Tolstoy's illness in 1902

TOLSTOY
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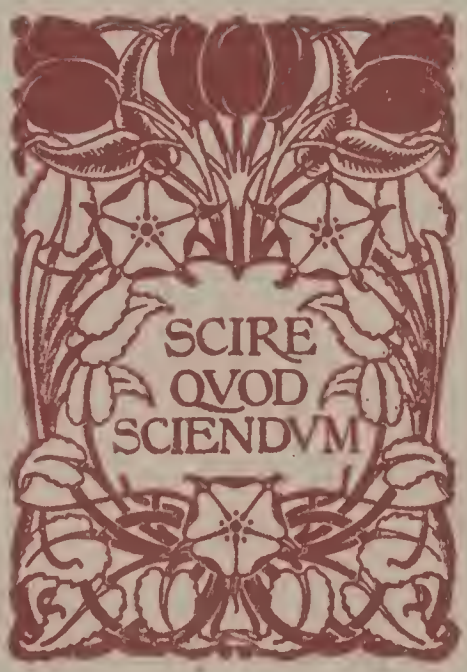
ART

BY

AYLMER MAUDE



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PREFACE

The title of this book calls for some explanation. What is of value in it all belongs to, or derives from, Tolstoy. Why then is it not issued simply as a translation of Tolstoy's essays on art?

The case is this: When Tolstoy's *What is Art?* (his chief work on the subject) appeared in 1898, it gave rise to extensive controversy. Several critics maintained that his propositions were incomprehensible or ridiculous.

It happened that I had translated the book into English in personal consultation with Tolstoy, besides exchanging a score of letters with him discussing every point in the book that was not perfectly plain to me. When my translation was completed and he had read it carefully, he wrote a preface for it, in which he appealed to "all who are interested in my views on art only to judge of them by the work in its present shape." He also said, "This book of mine, *What is Art?* appears now for the first time in its true form. More than one edition has already been issued in Russia, but in each case it has been mutilated by the censor."

I wrote a thirty-page Introduction to the book, in which I set out, as clearly as I could, what I understood to be Tolstoy's essential meaning, and in reply to an attack on Tolstoy in the *Quarterly Review,* I wrote another article—which appeared in the *Contemporary Review*—recapitulating my understanding of the matter. Both these essays received Tolstoy's emphatic approval. Of the first he wrote, "I have read your Introduction with great pleasure. You have admirably and strongly expressed the fundamental thought of

the book," and of the second he wrote, "Your article pleased me exceedingly, so clearly and strongly is the fundamental thought expressed."

It therefore happens that, though I had contributed no original ideas and had merely restated Tolstoy's views, my articles serve as a decisive reply to those who maintained that Tolstoy meant something he did not mean.

As evidence of his intention, therefore, these essays are worth reproducing. Had I let the book be published simply as a translation of Tolstoy, while including in it so much matter of my own, I should have been reproached for encumbering the translation with matter not written by Tolstoy. The objections to that course seem stronger than those to the course I have adopted; and no third way of dealing with the matter suggested itself to me.

The book is intended less for those who specialise in some particular sphere or art and are satisfied with the views held by their coterie, than for readers interested in the relation of art to life in general, and who wish to understand why art is of importance to mankind.

The illustrations consist chiefly of copies of Russian pictures mentioned by Tolstoy and which, since the Revolution, are not readily procurable. It has not in all cases been possible to procure first-rate reproductions but, such as they are, they show what Tolstoy was talking about and, as he was directing attention to the feelings they convey rather than to their technique, the quality of the reproduction is not of primary importance.

It is inconvenient that the name of a great writer should be spelt in more than one way; so I take this opportunity to mention that not only did Tolstoy write his name with a y, as did his wife and his literary executors, but that this is in accord with the plan laid down by the British Academy, in its

"Scheme for the Transliteration into English of words and names belonging to Russian and other Slavonic languages." On the Committee that dealt with this matter were Sir Paul Vinogradoff, Dr. Hagberg Wright, Dr. Seton Watson, Mr. Nevill Forbes, Mr. Minns, and other eminent authorities. The agreement of Tolstoy's own practice with the conclusions arrived at by such a Committee should suffice to set this vexed question finally at rest. It is indeed seldom wise to attempt to improve on a great modern writer's way of spelling his own name.

This volume presents, for the first time in English, a complete collection of Tolstoy's essays on art, and contains some that had not previously been translated.

What is Art?, which has appeared before, gives, I think, the most lucid statement of the nature of artistic activity and of its relation to the rest of life, that has ever been penned. The rest of the essays are chiefly valuable for the light they throw on the process by which Tolstoy—himself a great artist both in fiction and in the drama—arrived at the solution of this problem, which had occupied his mind from his youth upwards, but which he did not succeed in solving to his satisfaction until he had reached the age of three score years and ten.

AYLMER MAUDE.

Great Baddow
Chelmsford
England
26th September, 1924

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TOLSTOY ON ART

TOLSTOY ON ART

PART I

A SURVEY OF TOLSTOY'S ESSAY ON ART

TOLSTOY'S little volume *What is Art?* being out of print in England at present, it occurs to me that it may be well, instead of republishing it separately, to do what has not before been done and bring together into a single volume all Tolstoy's writings on art, especially as some of these which certainly deserve attention, are not included in any of the editions of his works that have been published in England or in America.

Tolstoy's views on art are often referred to, but seldom correctly presented. In the leading British literary organ, the *Times Literary Supplement,* of 28th April 1921, for instance, two reviewers, dealing with different works, referred to *What is Art?* and both of them attributed to Tolstoy views he had never either expressed or held. A letter in reply appeared a fortnight later in the same paper, saying:

"Allow me to point out to the reviewer of Mr. Joad's *Common-Sense Ethics* that Tolstoy never 'came to the conclusion that the word beauty means nothing and is useless.' On the contrary, *What is Art?* furnishes evidence—were evidence needed—that Tolstoy knew the meaning of the word and found it useful. For instance, he says: 'I fear it will be urged against me that having denied that *the conception of beauty can supply a standard* for works of art, I contradict myself by acknowledging ornaments to be works of art. The reproach is unjust, for the subject-matter of all kinds of ornamentation consists not in the beauty,

but in the *feeling* (of admiration of and delight in the combination of lines and colours) which the artist has experienced and with which he infects the spectator. Art remains what it was and what it must be: nothing but the infection by one man of another, or of others, with the *feelings* experienced by the infector. Among these feelings is the feeling of delight at what pleases the sight . . ."

"Here and elsewhere in the same book he understands and approves of beauty, and he uses the word, as in a passage in which he denounces exclusive art produced for a select circle as having 'lost its beauty,' but he is careful *not to base his definition of art* on the use of the word beauty, because that would merely substitute one problem for another, since there is as much vagueness in the use of the word 'beauty' as in that of the word 'art.' 'There is no objective definition of beauty.' Tolstoy required a clear workable definition, and found one which meets the case.

"The reviewer of Mr. Hind's *Art and I* says: 'Tolstoy held that a Russian peasant, just because he was a Russian peasant, was a born judge of art.' This is again a flagrant misrepresentation. What Tolstoy says is that the highest art has been understood by simple *unperverted peasant labourers;* there is no special claim made on behalf of Russians. He instances the poems of Homer, admitted to be very great art yet eagerly listened to by 'men of those times who were even less educated than our labourers.' Tolstoy's argument is, that a perverted education may sterilize man's capacity to enjoy art, but that an unperverted man naturally possesses 'that simple feeling familiar to the plainest man and even to a child, that sense of infection with another's feeling—compelling us to joy in another's gladness, to sorrow at another's grief, and to mingle souls with another—which is the very essence of art.'"

It would be easy to multiply instances both of the attention paid to Tolstoy's views and of the misrepresentation of them that is still common, but the above will suffice for the present purpose.

Something happened at the time of the first appearance of *What is Art?* which hindered the due understanding of it. Among his many reformist activities, Tolstoy wished to see the business of publishing set on a new basis, and he assumed that it would be easy to improve on the methods employed by

the best existing publishers. Desiring no profit from his works, he was inclined to encourage the publishing experiments of people who professed agreement with his social and religious views; and it happened that *What is Art?* was completed just at the time when a small and impecunious group calling itself The Brotherhood Publishing Co. had started business in London, to propagate Tolstoyan views. At his wish and at that of his friend Tchertkoff this Brotherhood Publishing Co. was entrusted with the first publication of the version of *What is Art?* which I had made from Tolstoy's manuscript chapter by chapter in consultation with him as he wrote. It thus happened that the manager of the Brotherhood Publishing Co. received the work before anyone in France and, without asking permission, supplied to a Paris periodical the chapters in which French writers and painters of the day were drastically dealt with. The publication of this detached portion of the book apart from the chapters disclosing his general argument was much regretted by Tolstoy. It had the appearance of a wilful and unprovoked attack on a number of distinguished individuals and evoked great indignation; so that when, shortly afterwards, the book itself appeared in France, it was at once met by a storm of invective and denunciation.

Now in those days French criticism led the literary world of Europe and America, especially in regard to Russian literature, and in face of this storm only certain of the most independent English critics ventured to trust their own judgment and to testify to the value and importance of Tolstoy's work.

During the quarter of a century that has passed since then his views have so far penetrated the public mind that some of them are already becoming commonplaces, but there are many indications that his message is still far from being completely understood.

It may be of interest to see how Tolstoy's opinions on art grew and developed. At the age of thirty, in February, 1858, he joined the Moscow Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, and delivered a lecture on "The Supremacy of the Artistic Element in Literature." It was never published, and has now been lost. From the record that remains, it would seem that he argued that art should treat of what is always beautiful and of what is as unalterable as the fundamental laws of the soul, and that he condemned the utilization of art for the indictment of particular social evils in one's own age and country. Many literary men in Russia were then much concerned about the emancipation of the serfs, and Tolstoy seems to have suggested that they were making art a tool, and failing to employ it in the loftiest way. He had evidently far to travel before reaching his ultimate conclusions.

In the winter of 1861, when absorbed in the school he had started for peasant children at Yásnaya Polyána, he went for a walk late one evening with some lads of ten or twelve years of age. Their talk turned on singing, drawing, and art in general. Tolstoy's account of this walk will be found in the next chapter. He says: "We began to speak of the fact that not everything exists for use, but that there is also beauty, and that art is beauty, and we understood one another, and Fedka quite understood what singing is for. It feels strange to repeat what we said then, but it seems to me that we said all that can be said about utility, and plastic and moral beauty."

In another article of that period he speaks of his amazement at finding that these young peasant boys, when relieved of the technical and mechanical difficulties of writing by having it done for them, could compose stories showing high artistic feeling.

After many experiments he found that the most efficacious way of stimulating these boys was to suggest to them interest-

ing themes: for instance, that they should write short stories to illustrate popular proverbs. When they became interested in framing these stories, it was not in the first instance they who had to do the actual writing, but Tolstoy who wrote at their dictation. In this way their eagerness and their creative faculty were not checked, and it was possible quickly to point out to them wherein the real difficulties of authorship lie. The real difficulty, to anyone possessed of imagination and an active mind, is to select from all the thoughts that suggest themselves those which are really most essential to the story, to avoid repetition, and to maintain a due proportion between the various parts. As soon as the boys found that they really could compose stories which interested other people (and a talented child is able to do this almost from the first if he is judiciously advised and his exuberances checked) they naturally became intensely eager to master the mechanical difficulties, especially as Tolstoy was careful not to annoy them by injudicious remarks about the tidiness of their copy-books, the quality of their penmanship, or mere grammatical errors. A mastery of these things can best be acquired through the boy's desire to avoid absurdity and to be intelligible. Tolstoy found that it merely annoys boys to be told that a certain mistake infringes a rule of grammar. They care nothing about grammar—they detest it. But if you put the thing another way round, and point out to a child that what he has said is unintelligible, or is open to misconstruction, or is not the best way of saying the thing, he understands the common sense of that, and learns his grammar or orthography in order to reach the result he desires.

Similarly with all the sciences. Things that the school-books and the pedagogues often begin with, dry classifications and unknown words, have the effect of repelling a boy and making him withdraw into his shell as a tortoise does at the approach of danger. The proper way, Tolstoy says, is to

begin with things the child can verify by his own observation, and in which he can be expected to take an intelligent interest. When he already possesses an accumulation of facts which to him are real and interesting, he may be glad enough to accept classification and terminology, to enable him to sort out his facts and deal with them more easily.

With music also this is true. Tolstoy achieved remarkable success by avoiding the usual pedantry and compulsion, not obliging any boy to work at it who did not like it, and helping the pupils to get quickly at the real art of the thing in its simplest forms.

Convinced of the artistic capacity of these lads Tolstoy declared:

"I think the need to enjoy art and to serve art is inherent in every human being whatever race or class he may belong to, and that this need has its rights and should be satisfied. Taking that position as an axiom, I say that, if the enjoyment and production of art by every one presents inconveniences and inconsistencies, the reason lies in the character and direction art has taken: about which we must be on our guard lest we foist anything false on the rising generation and lest we prevent it from producing something new both in form and matter."

He was much troubled by the lack of good books for the people, and wrote: "Let us print good books for the people. . . . How simple and easy it seems, like all great thoughts! There is only one obstacle, namely, that there exist no good books for the people either here or in Europe. To print such books they must first be produced, and none of our philanthropists think of undertaking *that* line of work."

This was in 1862. Twenty years later Tolstoy set himself to the task he saw to be so necessary, and wrote that delightful series of short and simple stories for the people, which are collected in the volume of *Twenty-Three Tales*.[1] He also

[1] Oxford University Press, "World's Classics" series, London and New York.

published a short play called *The First Distiller,* adapted for performance at any country fair or by any workers' group, and among his posthumous plays there is another of similar character, *The Cause of It All.* They are both included in the volume of his *Plays* issued in *The World's Classics* series.

It is of course harder to produce work which shall really convey a feeling to a wide audience than it is for a writer to restrict himself to a circle who have undergone the same training, culture, and social experience, as himself. To reach the wide mass of humanity the artist, in addition to real sincerity, must have the qualities of brevity and simplicity, as one sees them exemplified in the Gospel parables, the Old Testament stories, popular folk tales, the old ballads, and in a lesser degree in such modern works as Dickens' *The Christmas Carol.* But if the achievement be difficult, its social importance is immensely great, and nothing in modern literature in this direction has been more successful than Tolstoy's stories in *Twenty-Three Tales.* They have made their way into all languages and have been welcomed everywhere by young and old, learned and simple alike.

Curiously enough, the Oxford University Press edition of Tolstoy's works, the aim of which is to give English-speaking readers a more readable, reliable, authoritative, and complete, rendering of Tolstoy's works than had previously been produced, originated from Tolstoy's efforts to provide good literature for the Russian people. When the late W. T. Stead visited him at Yásnaya Polyána they discussed the possibility of providing popular editions of the best literature at a cheap price. Tolstoy spoke of what was being done in that direction under his auspices in Moscow. And Stead after his return to England issued a series of penny booklets containing summaries of the best books. This plan aimed too high, and was not permanently successful; but Grant Richards, who was one of Stead's assistants at the time, saw the possi-

bilities in the idea and, after starting his own business, brought out the *World's Classics* series, well-printed and well-bound at a very moderate price. One of the volumes he issued was *Essays and Letters* by Tolstoy. The book met with Tolstoy's cordial approval, and of the rendering he wrote me: "Your translations are very good because, besides having excellent command of both languages, you also love the thoughts you transmit; this gives me great pleasure." Henry Frowde, who was the London representative of the Oxford University Press, took over the series when Grant Richards failed, and continued it. *Twenty-Three Tales* was the next Tolstoy volume that was added, and others followed. What distinguishes the *World Classics* among other series of inexpensive books is the care devoted to the editing and to the quality of the versions produced. In this respect it claims to be far ahead of any other edition of Tolstoy's works.

Tolstoy's marriage and the production of *War and Peace*,[1] *Anna Karenina*[1] and the *First Russian Reading Books* occupied him for twenty years, during which he wrote little about the philosophy of art, though references to art in his novels and stories indicate that its influence on life always occupied his mind. He had previously in *Lucern* (1857) described an itinerant Swiss musician and expressed indignation that the wealthy tourists who enjoyed that musician's art failed to contribute to his needs. A year later, in *Albert*, he described a drunken but talented violinist he met in Petersburg. In actual life he took Rudolph (the prototype of Albert) to Yásnaya Polyána, and there studied music with him.

In *War and Peace*[1] there is a striking passage dealing with the effect of Natasha's singing on Nicholas, when he returns home in despair after heavy losses at cards (ch. 15, Book IV, pp. 434–5).

Later, in 1879, in his very interesting *Confession*,[1] in the

[1] Oxford University Press, "World's Classics" series, London and New York.

course of a scathing denunciation of the life of the social circles to which he belonged he says:

"During that time I began to write from vanity, covetousness, and pride. In my writings I did the same as in my life. To get fame and money, for the sake of which I wrote, it was necessary to hide the good and to display the evil. And I did so. How often in my writings I contrived to hide under the guise of indifference, or even of banter, those strivings towards goodness which gave meaning to my life! And I succeeded in this and was praised.

"At twenty-six years of age I returned to Petersburg after the war and met the writers. They received me as one of themselves and flattered me. And before I had time to look round I had adopted the views on life of the set of authors I had come among, and these views completely obliterated all my former strivings to improve. Those views furnished a theory which justified the dissoluteness of my life.

"The view of life of these people, my comrades in authorship, consisted in this: that life in general goes on developing, and in this development we—men of thought—have the chief part; and among men of thought it is we—artists and poets [1]—who have the greatest influence. Our vocation is to teach mankind. And lest the simple question should suggest itself: what do I know and what can I teach? it was explained in this theory that this need not be known, and that the artist and poet teach unconsciously. I was considered an admirable artist and poet, and therefore it was very natural for me to adopt this theory. I, artist and poet, wrote and taught, without myself knowing what. For this I was paid money; I had excellent food, lodging, women, and society, and I had fame; which showed that what I taught was very good.

"This faith in the meaning of poetry and in the development of life was a religion, and I was one of its priests. To be its priest was very pleasant and profitable. And I lived a considerable time in this faith without doubting its validity. But in the second, and especially in the third year of this life, I began to doubt the infallibility of this religion and to examine it. My first cause of doubt was that I began to notice that the priests of this religion were not all in accord among themselves. Some said: we are the best and most useful teachers; we teach what is needed but the others teach wrongly. Others said: No! we are the real

[1] In Russian the word 'poet' is used not only of writers of verse, but also of writers of fiction and poetic prose.

teachers and *you* teach wrongly. And they disputed, quarrelled, abused, cheated, and tricked one another. There were also many among us who did not care who was right and who was wrong, but were simply bent on attaining their covetous aims by means of this activity of ours. All this obliged me to doubt the validity of our creed.

"Moreover, having begun to doubt the truth of the authors' creed itself, I also began to observe its priests more attentively, and I became convinced that almost all the priests of that religion, the writers, were immoral, and for the most part men of bad worthless character, much inferior to those whom I had met in my former dissipated and military life; but they were self-confident and self-satisfied as only those can be who are quite holy or who do not know what holiness is. These people revolted me, and I realized that that faith was a fraud.

"But strange to say, though I understood this fraud and renounced it, yet I did not renounce the rank these people gave me: the rank of artist, poet and teacher. I naïvely imagined that I was a poet and artist and could teach everybody without myself knowing what I was teaching, and I acted accordingly.

"From my intimacy with these men I acquired a new vice: abnormally developed pride, and an insane assurance that it was my vocation to teach men, without knowing what.

"To remember that time and my own state of mind and that of those men (though there are thousands like them to-day) is sad and terrible and ludicrous, and arouses exactly the feeling one experiences in a lunatic asylum.

"We were all then convinced that it was necessary for us to speak, write, and print, as quickly as possible, and that it was all wanted for the good of humanity. And thousands of us, contradicting and abusing one another, all printed and wrote—teaching others. And without remarking that we knew nothing, and that to the simplest of life's questions: What is good and what is evil? we did not know how to reply, we all, not listening to one another, talked at the same time, sometimes backing and praising one another in order to be backed and praised in turn, sometimes getting angry with one another—just as in a lunatic asylum.

"Thousands of workmen laboured to the extreme limit of their strength day and night, setting the type and printing millions of words which the post carried all over Russia, and we still went on teaching, and could in no way find time to teach enough, and were always angry that sufficient attention was not paid us.

"It was terribly strange, but it is now quite comprehensible. Our real innermost concern was to get as much money and praise as possible. To gain that end we could do nothing except write books and papers. So we did that. But in order to do such useless work and to feel assured that we were very important people we required a theory justifying our activity. And so among us this theory was devised: 'All that exists is reasonable. All that exists develops. And it all develops by means of culture. And culture is measured by the circulation of books and newspapers. And we are paid money and are respected because we write books and newspapers, and therefore we are the most useful and the best of men.' This theory would have been all very well if we had been unanimous, but as every thought expressed by one of us was met by a diametrically opposed thought expressed by another, we ought to have been driven to reflection. But we ignored this; people paid us money, and those on our side praised us; so each of us considered himself justified.

"It is now clear to me that this was just as in a lunatic asylum; but then I only dimly suspected this, and, like all lunatics, simply called all men lunatics except myself."

And further on he says:

"Art, poetry? . . . Under the influence of success and the praise of men I had long assured myself that this was a thing one could do though death was drawing near—death which destroys all things, including my work and its remembrance; but soon I saw that that too was a fraud. It was plain to me that art was an adornment of life, an allurement to life. But life had lost its attraction for me; so how could I attract others? As long as I was not living my own life but was borne on the waves of some other life—as long as I believed that life had a meaning, though one I could not express—the reflection of life in poetry and art of all kinds afforded me pleasure: it was pleasant to look at life in the mirror of art. But when I began to seek the meaning of life, and felt the necessity of living my own life, that mirror became for me unnecessary, superfluous, ridiculous, or painful. I could no longer soothe myself with what I now saw in the mirror, namely, that my position was stupid and desperate. It was all very well to enjoy the sight when in the depth of my soul I believed that my life had a meaning. Then the play of lights—comic, tragic, touching, beautiful, and terrible—in life amused me. But when I knew life to be meaningless and terrible, the play in the mirror could no longer amuse me."

But it is plain that in his *Confession* Tolstoy is not primarily concerned with the philosophy of art. He introduces it only as part of his scathing indictment of the life of the well-to-do classes.

Similarly in *What Then Must We Do?* (1884) his terrific indictment of modern civilisation includes frequent reference to art and science, but there is no separate discussion of art, and his main point is that, if art is as necessary and beneficial to man as is generally supposed, a civilization is morally indefensible that practically excludes the mass of the people from its enjoyment—including those who spend their whole lives in printing books, building theatres, libraries, and picture galleries, making paints and canvas for artists, or providing food, clothing, shelter, fuel and conveyance, for all who devote themselves to art. If the labourer produces material food that the artist consents to consume, the artist should in common fairness produce mental and spiritual food adapted for the labourer's consumption. But we, says Tolstoy, consume what the labourer produces for us and then write books, sonnets, and sonatas, not for him but for one another, dishonestly leaving his mental needs unsatisfied. That indictment, powerful as it is, is a thing apart from Tolstoy's elucidation of the philosophy of art, and finds its place better in *What Then Must We Do?* (which is due to appear shortly in the *World's Classics* series) than in this volume.

In 1889 appeared *The Kreutzer Sonata,*[1] containing some striking references to music.

The opinions there expressed are put into the mouth of Pózdnyshev, a man mentally unbalanced, who has killed his wife without any convincing proof that his jealousy was well-grounded. Tolstoy makes Pózdnyshev's abnormality quite clear. He is described as terribly nervous and excitable, "with unnaturally glittering eyes which kept rapidly moving

[1] Oxford University Press, "World's Classics" series, London and New York.

from one object to another." Pózdnyshev says that he was "on the very point of suicide"; remarks that "you can drive me to madness. I cannot answer for myself." We are told of "the mad animal jealousy in him." And he says, " I could not have said what it was I wanted. It was downright madness!"

His whole way of expressing himself is extreme, and granting that Tolstoy uses him to express in exaggerated form views he himself arrived at while writing the book, we have no right to add anything to such emphatic utterances.

What then does this Pózdnyshev say? He says:

"One of the most distressing conditions of life for a jealous man (and every one is jealous in our world) are certain society conventions which allow a man and woman the greatest and most dangerous proximity. You would become a laughing-stock to others if you tried to prevent such nearness at balls, or the nearness of doctors to their women-patients, or of people occupied with art, sculpture, or especially music. A couple are occupied with the noblest of arts, music; this demands a certain nearness, and there is nothing reprehensible in that, and only a stupid jealous husband can see anything undesirable in it. Yet everybody knows that it is by means of those very pursuits, especially of music, that the greater part of the adulteries in our society occur. . . ."

In another passage he continues his narration:

"The dinner was, as dinners are, dull and pretentious. The music began pretty early. Oh, how I remember every detail of that evening! I remember how he brought in his violin, unlocked the case, took off a cover a lady had embroidered for him, drew out the violin, and began tuning it. I remember how my wife sat down with pretended unconcern, under which I saw that she was trying to conceal great timidity—chiefly as to her own ability—sat down at the piano, and then the usual *a* on the piano began, the pizzicato of the violin, and the arrangement of the music. Then I remember how they glanced at one another, turned to look at the audience who were seating themselves, said something to one another and began. He took the first chords. His face grew serious, stern, and sympathetic, and listening to the sounds he

produced, he touched the strings with careful fingers. The piano answered him. The music began. . . .

"They played Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata. Do you know the first presto? You do? Ugh! Ugh! It is a terrible thing, that sonata. And especially that part. And in general music is a dreadful thing! What is it? I don't understand. What is music? What does it do? And why does it do what it does? They say music exalts the soul. Nonsense, it is not true! It has an effect, an awful effect—I am speaking of myself—but not of an exalting kind. *It has neither an exalting nor a debasing effect, but it produces agitation.* How can I put it? Music makes me forget myself, my real position; it transports me to some other position, not my own. Under the influence of music it seems to me that I feel what I do not really feel, that I understand what I do not understand, that I can do what I cannot do. I explain it by the fact that music acts like yawning, like laughter: I am not sleepy, but I yawn when I see some one yawning; there is nothing for me to laugh at, but I laugh when I hear people laughing.

"Music carries me immediately and directly into the mental condition in which the man was who composed it. My soul merges with his and together with him I pass from one condition into another; but why this happens, I don't know. You see, he who wrote, let us say, the Kreutzer Sonata—Beethoven—knew of course why he was in that condition; that condition caused him to do certain actions, and therefore that condition had a meaning for him, but for me—none at all. That is why music only agitates and doesn't lead to a conclusion. Well, when a military march is played, the soldiers step to the music and the music has achieved its object. A dance is played, I dance, and the music has achieved its object. Mass has been sung, I receive Communion, and that music too has reached a conclusion. Otherwise it is only agitating, and what ought to be done in that agitation is lacking. That is why music sometimes acts so dreadfully, so terribly. In China, music is a State affair. And that is as it should be. How can one allow anyone who pleases to hypnotize another, or many others, and do what he likes with them. And especially that this hynotist should be the first immoral man who turns up?

"It is a terrible instrument in the hands of any chance user! Take that Kreutzer Sonata, for instance, how can that first presto be played in a drawing-room among ladies in low-necked dresses? To hear that played, to clap a little, and then to eat ices and talk of the latest scandal? Such things should only be played on certain important significant oc-

casions, and then only when certain actions answering to such music are wanted; play it then and do what the music has moved you to. Otherwise an awakening of energy and feeling unsuited both to the time and the place, to which no outlet is given, cannot but act harmfully. At any rate on me that piece had an awful effect; it was as if quite new feelings, new possibilities, of which I had till then been unaware, had been revealed to me. 'That's how it is: not at all as I used to think and live, but that way,' something seemed to say within me. What this new thing was that had been revealed to me, I could not explain to myself, but the consciousness of this new condition was very joyous. All those same people, including my wife and him, appeared in a new light.

"After that allegro they played the beautiful, but common and unoriginal, andante with trite variations, and the very weak finale. Then, at the request of the visitors, they played Ernst's Elegy and a few small pieces. They were all good, but they did not produce on me one-hundredth part of the impression the first piece had. The effect of the first piece formed the background for them all.

"I felt lighthearted and cheerful the whole evening. I had never seen my wife as she was that evening. Those shining eyes, that severe, significant expression while she played, and her melting languor and feeble, pathetic, and blissful smile after they had finished. I saw all that, but did not attribute any meaning to it except that she was feeling what I felt, and that to her as to me new feelings, never before experienced, were revealed or, as it were, recalled. The evening ended satisfactorily and the visitors departed."

Subsequently Pózdnyshev says:

"Only then did I remember their faces that evening when, after the Kreutzer Sonata, they played some impassioned little piece, I don't remember by whom impassioned to the point of obscenity."

These allusions of Pózdnyshev to music have frequently been misrepresented, owing no doubt to the title of the story. But anyone who reads it carefully will see that he does not attribute any dissolute influence to the *Kreutzer Sonata*. He expressly says that it was some little piece by a composer whose name he does not remember which was "sensual to the

point of obscenity." Of the *Kreutzer Sonata,* and of music generally, what he says is that it can have a "terrible" influence, because it lifts a man out of his ordinary condition and arouses emotions which upset his balance and expose him to various influences, which, amid certain surroundings, may be bad.

It is an instance of the thoughtlessness with which works of fiction are often read, that these utterances attributed to Pózdnyshev have been taken as an indication that Tolstoy himself regarded Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* as an immoral work! One should compare Pózdnyshev's utterances with what Tolstoy had said in *War and Peace,* when Nicholas Rostóv felt his whole mood altered by his sister's singing, and ceased to despair or for a time even to feel his losses. Music in both cases lifted people out of their customary or accidental mood, and released energies which might flow in different directions according to circumstances.

"Oh, how that chord vibrated, and how moved was something that was best in Rostov's soul! And this something was apart from everything else in the world. What were losses and Dólokhov and words of honour? . . . All nonsense! One might kill and rob and yet be happy!"

To see more clearly what was Tolstoy's considered opinions about music, one must turn to *What is Art?* p. 287:

"Sometimes people who are together, if not hostile to one another, are at least estranged in mood and feeling, till perhaps a story, a performance, a picture . . . but oftenest of all music, unites them all as by an electric flash, and in place of their former isolation and even enmity, they are all conscious of union and mutual love. Each is glad that another feels what he feels; glad of the communion established not only between him and all present, but also with all now living who will yet share the same impression; and more than that, he feels the mysterious gladness of a communion which, reaching beyond the grave, unites us

with all men of the past who have been moved by the same feelings and with all men of the future who will yet be touched by them."

That passage effectually disposes of the suggestion that Tolstoy regarded the normal effects of music as harmful.

Tolstoy felt that all art, by its power to sway man's feelings, contains much that is dangerous and terrible as well as much that is necessary and ennobling, but one cannot read *What is Art?* without recognizing how strongly he felt the beneficial effect music may have.

Besides these references in his novels and stories before he had fully cleared the matter up in his own mind and had expressed it in *What is Art?* Tolstoy dealt with various aspects of the matter, more particularly from the ethical side, in a series of articles, most of which aimed at drawing attention to stories or pictures of which he specially approved. Among the earliest of these were a note to accompany a reproduction of his friend Gay's picture, *The Last Supper*,—a very simple account of the incident depicted, and an article *On Truth in Art,* which served as preface to a book intended for children; these were followed by an important and discriminating preface to Guy de Maupassant's works which greatly interested Tolstoy, and by an appreciative preface to Semënov's Peasant Stories. After these came an essay *On Art,* in which Tolstoy attempted to deal with the general philosophy of the matter, but he was dissatisfied with this attempt and withheld it from publication till the matter had completely cleared itself up in his mind, and he had expressed it in *What is Art?* in a way that seemed to him adequate.

When *What is Art?* appeared, Bernard Shaw wrote: "This book is a most effective booby trap. It is written with so utter a contempt for the objections which the routine critic is sure to allege against it that many a dilettantist reviewer has already accepted it as a butt set up by Providence. . . . Who-

ever is really conversant with art recognizes in it the voice of the master." And Mr. A. B. Walkley said: "This calmly and cogently reasoned effort to put art on a new basis is a literary event of the first importance." Now the "booby trap" of which Shaw speaks can be tried in this way. Induce some friend—preferably one interested in art, or who has preconceived opinions on the subject,—to read Tolstoy's book, and if you find that on reading it he concentrates on the dross he can find in it and devotes himself to points and examples he can disagree with, while remaining blind to the gold it contains, you have caught your booby! For there is much gold to be found in it, and the gold is more valuable than the dross.

Before that (in 1893) he had published a preface to a translation of extracts from Amiel's *Journal.* Later he wrote prefaces to a Russian translation of W. von Polenz's German novel, *Der Büttnerbauer* (in 1902), and to Chékhov's story, *Darling* (in 1905), and notes to reproductions of *Orlóv's Pictures of Peasant Life* (in 1909).

Besides these, in his last years, he wrote his highly controversial article *On Shakespeare,* in 1906, of which one may say that, though he read English with facility, Tolstoy was not so at home in our language that he could be "enchanted by the mere word music that makes Shakespeare so irresistible in English," to borrow a phrase from Bernard Shaw. But Tolstoy's experience as a dramatist caused him to acknowledge that "the movement of feeling, its increase, alteration, and the combination of many contradictory feelings, are often expressed truly and strongly in some of Shakespeare's scenes. And when performed by good actors this evokes, at least for a time, sympathy with the characters presented. Shakespeare, himself an actor and a clever man, knew how to express not by speech only but by exclamations, gestures, and the repetition of words, the spiritual conditions and variations of feel-

ing that occur in the characters he presents in his plays. So, for instance, in many places Shakespeare's characters, instead of uttering words, only exclaim or weep, or in the middle of a monologue often show by a gesture the strain of their position (as when Lear says 'Pray you undo this button'), or in a moment of strong emotion they repeat a question, and cause a word that has struck them to be repeated, as is done by Othello, Macduff, Cleopatra, and others. Similar clever methods of revealing the movements of feeling, furnishing good actors with opportunities of showing their powers, have often been mistaken, and are mistaken, by many critics for the presentation of character."

Apart from this practical mastery of stage-craft, which gives actors and actresses such great opportunities, Tolstoy denies the claims usually made on behalf of Shakespeare as a thinker or a faithful presenter of characters true to life. He gives reasons, examples, and instances, for his opinion, and if he is in error it should not be difficult for Shakespeare-lovers to furnish as closely reasoned a reply. All that need here be said is that, knowing what a strongly established opinion he was challenging, he perhaps emphasised his statement the more—for moderation was never a characteristic of his.

There is some indication that he was conscious of another side of the case, for once, when his friend, A. P. Chékhov, came to see him when he was ill in bed, he pressed the latter's hand at parting and said, "Good-bye, Anton Pávlovich. You know how fond I am of you, and how I detest Shakespeare. Still, he did write plays better than you do."

A Talk on the Drama has been added, which is taken from I. Tenerómo's *Life and Talks of L. N. Tolstoy* (St. Petersburg, undated, but *c.* 1907). This bears many signs of authenticity, corresponds with what one knows of Tolstoy's

views, and seems sufficiently interesting to justify its inclusion.

In an Appendix is given a translation of Chékhov's *Darling*, that readers of Tolstoy's preface to that work may see what he was writing about.

PART II

SCHOOLBOYS AND ART

The following account of Tolstoy's walk with boys from his school at Yásnaya Polyána is taken from Chapter VIII, The Schools, in Aylmer Maude's *Life of Tolstoy,* Volume 1, (Constable, London). It shows how Tolstoy, for the second time, found himself faced by the question: What is Art? which had arisen when he spoke to the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature. This time it was put to him by a ten-year-old peasant boy, and it then seemed to him that "we said all that can be said about utility and plastic and moral beauty."

THE classes generally finish about eight or nine o'clock (unless carpentering keeps the elder boys somewhat later), and the whole band run shouting into the yard, and there, calling to one another, begin to separate, making for different parts of the village. Occasionally they arrange to coast down-hill to the village in a large sledge that stands outside the gate. They tie up the shafts, throw themselves into it, and squealing, disappear from sight in a cloud of snow, leaving here and there on their path black patches of children who have tumbled out. In the open air, out of school (for all its freedom), new relations are formed between pupil and teacher: freer, simpler and more trustful—those very relations which seem to us the ideal which School should aim at.

Not long ago we read Gógol's story *Viy*[1] in the highest class. The final scenes affected them strongly, and excited their imagination. Some of them played the witch, and kept alluding to the last chapters. . . .

[1] The *Viy* is an Earth-Spirit, and Gógol's tale is gruesome.

Out of doors it was a moonless winter night, with clouds in the sky, not cold. We stopped at the crossroads. The elder boys, in their third year at school, stopped near me asking me to accompany them further. The younger ones looked at us and rushed off down-hill. They had begun to learn with a new master, and between them and me there is not the same confidence as between the older boys and myself.

"Well, let us go to the wood" (a small wood about one hundred and twenty yards from the house), said one of them. The most insistent was Fédka, a boy of ten, with a tender, receptive, poetic yet daring nature. Danger seems to form the chief condition of pleasure for him. In summer it always frightened me to see how he, with two other boys, would swim out into the very middle of the pond, which is nearly one hundred and twenty yards wide, and would now and then disappear in the hot reflection of the summer sun and swim under water; and how he would then turn on his back, causing fountains of water to rise, and calling with his high-pitched voice to his comrades on the bank to see what a fine fellow he was.

He now knew there were wolves in the wood, and so he wanted to go there. All agreed; and the four of us went to the wood. Another boy, a lad of twelve, physically and morally strong, whom I will call Sëmka, went on in front and kept calling and "ah-ou-ing" with his ringing voice, to some one at a distance. Prónka, a sickly, mild, and very gifted lad, from a poor family (sickly probably chiefly from lack of food), walked by my side. Fédka walked between me and Sëmka, talking all the time in a particularly gentle voice: now relating how he had herded horses in summer, now saying there was nothing to be afraid of, and now asking, "Suppose one should jump out?" and insisting on my giving some reply. We did not go into the wood: that would have been too dreadful; but even where we were, near the wood, it was

darker, the road was scarcely visible, and the lights of the village were hidden from view. Sëmka stopped and listened: "Stop, you fellows! What is this?" said he suddenly.

We were silent and, though we heard nothing, things seemed to grow more gruesome.

"What shall we do if it leaps out . . . and comes at us?" asked Fédka.

We began to talk about Caucasian robbers. They remembered a Caucasian tale I had told them long ago, and I again told them of "braves," of Cossacks, and of Hadji Murad.[1] Sëmka went on in front, treading boldly in his big boots, his broad back swaying regularly. Prónka tried to walk by my side, but Fédka pushed him off the path, and Prónka—who, probably on account of his poverty, always submitted—only ran up alongside at the most interesting passages, sinking in the snow up to his knees.

Everyone who knows anything of Russian peasant children knows that they are not accustomed to, and cannot bear, any caresses, affectionate words, kisses, hand-touchings, and so forth. I have seen a lady in a peasant school, wishing to pet a boy, say: "Come, I will give you a kiss, dear!" and actually kiss him; and the boy was ashamed and offended, and could not understand why he had been so treated. Boys of five are already above such caresses—they are no longer babies. I was therefore particularly struck when Fédka, walking beside me, at the most terrible part of the story suddenly touched me lightly with his sleeve, and then clasped two of my fingers in his hand, and kept hold of them. As soon as I stopped speaking, Fédka demanded that I should go on, and did this in such a beseeching and agitated voice that it was impossible not to comply with his wish.

"Now then, don't get in the way!" said he once angrily

[1] A daring leader of the hill-tribes, who was prominent at the time Tolstoy was serving in the Caucasus.

to Prónka, who had run in front of us. He was so carried away as even to be cruel; so agitated yet happy was he, holding on to my fingers, that he could let no one dare to interrupt his pleasure.

"More! More! It is fine!" said he.

We had passed the wood and were approaching the village from the other end.

"Let's go on," said all the boys when the lights became visible. "Let us take another turn!"

We went on in silence, sinking here and there in the snow, not hardened by much traffic. A white darkness seemed to sway before our eyes; the clouds hung low, as though something had heaped them upon us. There was no end to that whiteness, amid which we alone crunched along the snow. The wind sounded through the bare tops of the aspens, but where we were, behind the woods, it was calm.

I finished my story by telling how a "brave," surrounded by his enemies, sang his death-song and threw himself on his dagger. All were silent.

"Why did he sing a song when he was surrounded?" asked Sëmka.

"Weren't you told?—he was preparing for death!" replied Fédka, aggrieved.

"I think he said a prayer," added Prónka.

All agreed. Fédka suddenly stopped.

"How was it, you told us, your Aunt had her throat cut?" asked he. (He had not yet had enough horrors.) "Tell us! Tell us!"

I again told them that terrible story of the murder of the Countess Tolstoy,[1] and they stood silently about me watching my face.

"The fellow got caught!" said Sëmka.

[1] Some details of this crime are given in "Why do Men Stupefy Themselves?" in *Essays and Letters*, published in the *World's Classics*.

"He was afraid to go away in the night, while she was lying with her throat cut!" said Fédka; "I should have run away!" and he gathered my two fingers yet more closely in his hand.

We stopped in the thicket beyond the threshing-floor at the very end of the village. Sëmka picked up a dry stick from the snow and began striking it against the frosty trunk of a lime tree. Hoar frost fell from the branches on to our caps, and the noise of the blows resounded in the stillness of the wood.

"Lëv Nikoláevich," said Fédka to me (I thought he was again going to speak about the Countess), "why does one learn singing? I often think, why, really, does one?"

What made him jump from the terror of the murder to this question heaven only knows; yet by the tone of his voice, the seriousness with which he demanded an answer, and the attentive silence of the other two, one felt that there was some vital and legitimate connection between this question and our preceding talk. Whether the connection lay in some response to my suggestion that crime might be explained by lack of education (I had spoken of that), or whether he was testing himself—transferring himself into the mind of the murderer and remembering his own favourite occupation (he has a wonderful voice and immense musical talent), or whether the connection lay in the fact that he felt that now was the time for sincere conversation, and all the problems demanding solution rose in his mind—at any rate his question surprised none of us.

"And what is drawing for? And why write well?" said I, not knowing at all how to explain to him what art is for.

"What is drawing for?" repeated he thoughtfully. He really was asking, What is Art for? And I neither dared nor could explain.

"What is drawing for?" said Sëmka. "Why, you draw anything, and can then make it from the drawing."

"No, that is designing," said Fédka. "But why draw figures?"

Sëmka's matter-of-fact mind was not perplexed.

"What is a stick for, and what is a lime tree for?" said he, still striking the tree.

"Yes, what is a lime tree for?" said I.

"To make rafters of," replied Sëmka.

"But what is it for in summer, when not yet cut down?"

"It's no use then."

"No, really," insisted Fédka; "why does a lime tree grow?"

And we began to speak of the fact that not everything exists for use, but that there is also beauty, and that Art is beauty; and we understood one another, and Fédka quite understood why the lime tree grows and what singing is for.

Prónka agreed with us, but he thought rather of moral beauty: goodness.

Sëmka understood with his big brain, but did not acknowledge beauty apart from usefulness. He was in doubt (as often happens to men with great reasoning power): feeling Art to be a force, but not feeling in his soul the need of that force. He, like them, wished to get at Art by his reason, and tried to kindle that fire in himself.

"We'll sing *Who hath* to-morrow. I remember my part," said he. (He has a correct ear, but no taste or refinement in singing.) Fédka, however, fully understood that the lime tree is good when in leaf: good to look at in summer; and that that is enough.

Prónka understood that it is a pity to cut it down, because it, too, has life:

"Why, when we take the sap of a lime, it's like taking blood."

Sëmka, though he did not say so, evidently thought that there was little use in a lime when it was sappy.

It feels strange to repeat what we then said, but it seems to me that we said all that can be said about utility, and plastic and moral beauty.

We went on to the village. Fédka still clung to my hand; now, it seemed to me, from gratitude. We all were nearer one another that night than we had been for a long time. Prónka walked beside us along the broad village street.

"See, there is still a light in Masánov's house," said he. "As I was going to school this morning, Gavrúka was coming from the pub, as dru-u-nk as could be! His horse all in a lather and he beating it! I am always sorry for such things. Really, why should it be beaten?"

"And the other day, coming from Túla, my daddy gave his horse the reins," said Sëmka; "and it took him into a snowdrift, and there he slept—quite drunk."

"And Gavrúka kept on beating his horse over the eyes, and I felt so sorry," repeated Prónka again. "Why should he beat it? He got down and just flogged it."

Sëmka suddenly stopped.

"Our folk are already asleep," said he, looking in at the window of his crooked, dirty hut. "Won't you walk a little longer?"

"No."

"Go-o-od-bye, Lëv Nikoláevich!" shouted he suddenly, and tearing himself away from us as it were with an effort, he ran to the house, lifted the latch and disappeared.

"So you will take each of us home? First one and then the other?" said Fédka.

We went on. There was a light in Prónka's hut, and we looked in at the window. His mother, a tall and handsome but toil-worn woman, with black eyebrows and eyes, sat at the table, peeling potatoes. In the middle of the hut hung

a cradle. Prónka's brother, the mathematician from our second class, was standing at the table, eating potatoes with salt. It was a black, tiny, and dirty hut.

"What a plague you are!" shouted the mother at Prónka. "Where have you been?"

Prónka glanced at the window with a meek, sickly smile. His mother guessed that he had not come alone, and her face immediately assumed a feigned expression that was unpleasant.

Only Fédka was left.

"The travelling tailors are at our house, that is why there's a light there," said he in the softened voice that had come to him that evening. "Good-bye, Lëv Nikoláevich!" added he, softly and tenderly, and he began to knock with the ring attached to the closed door. "Let me in!" his high-pitched voice rang out amid the winter stillness of the village. It was long before they opened the door for him. I looked in at the window. The hut was a large one. The father was playing cards with a tailor, and some copper coins lay on the table. The wife, Fédka's stepmother, was sitting near the torch-stand, looking eagerly at the money. The young tailor, a cunning drunkard, was holding his cards on the table, bending them, and looking triumphantly at his opponent. Fédka's father, the collar of his shirt unbuttoned, his brow wrinkled with mental exertion and vexation, changed one card for another, and waved his horny hand in perplexity above them.

"Let me in!"

The woman rose and went to the door.

"Good-bye!" repeated Fédka, once again. "Let us always have such walks!"

PART III

THE LAST SUPPER

Letter-press to accompany a Half-tone Reproduction of N. N. Gay's Picture, "The Last Supper."

John XIII, v. 1–35 inclusive.

JESUS said: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies . . ."

At the last supper Jesus showed this by his acts.

Having washed the feet of his twelve disciples, he said: "I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you."

What had Jesus done, and what was the example he gave to his disciples?

When after supper Jesus began to wash the feet of his disciples and Simon Peter wished to oppose it, Jesus said to him: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter. Ye are clean but not all."

Neither Simon Peter nor the other disciples then understood why he said this. Only Judas Iscariot understood what Jesus was doing when, kneeling before him, he washed his feet.

Having washed the feet of his betrayer, Jesus rose, put on his garment, and having again sat down, said: "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master, and ye say well; for so I am."

But they, not knowing that Judas was a traitor, did not

understand what he had done and what he was teaching them.

Then, being troubled in spirit, Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

And again they did not understand what he was doing or what he was saying to them. They only looked at one another seeking to discover of whom he spoke.

Meanwhile the beloved disciple of Jesus was reclining on his bosom. And Simon Peter, raising himself, beckoned to the beloved disciple that he should ask the teacher of whom he spoke.

And the beloved disciple, leaning back on Jesus' breast, asked him.

But Jesus did not give a direct reply, knowing that if he named his enemy the disciples would be indignant and would want to punish the traitor.

Wishing not to destroy but to save Judas, Jesus, instead of replying, reached out his hand, took a piece of bread, and said softly: "He it is for whom I shall dip the sop and give it him," and when he had given the sop to Judas he said: "What thou doest do quickly."

The disciples, having heard this, thought that Jesus was sending Judas into the town to buy what was needed for the feast.

But Judas understood that Jesus was saving him from the wrath of the disciples, and immediately arose.

That is what is shown in the picture.

The beloved disciple, John, is the only one who knows who is the traitor.

He leaps up from his seat and stares at Judas. He does not understand, does not believe that a living man can hate one who so loves him. He is sorry for the unfortunate man and terrified for him. Simon Peter guesses the truth from

"THE LAST SUPPER"

After a painting by N. N. Gay, 1863

John's look, and turns his eyes now on John, now on Jesus, and now on the betrayer; and in his ardent heart anger and desire to defend his beloved teacher flame up.

Judas has risen, gathered up his garment, thrown it around him, and taken the first step, but his eyes cannot turn away from the saddened face of the teacher. There is still time. He can still turn back and fall at his feet confessing his sin, but the devil already possesses his heart.

"Do not submit!" he says to him. "Do not yield to weakness, do not subject yourself to reproaches from the proud disciples. They are looking at you and only awaiting a chance to humiliate you. Go!"

Jesus lies leaning on his arm. He is not looking, but sees all, and knows what is going on in Judas' heart, and he waits and suffers on his account. He pities the son of perdition. Jesus with his own hand has fed his enemy, washed his feet, saved him from human punishment, and until the end calls him to repentance and forgives him. Yet Judas does not return to him.

And Jesus grieves for Judas, and for all who do not come to him.

Judas went out and hid himself in the darkness of the night.

Hardly had the door closed before the disciples all realized who the betrayer was. They are agitated and indignant. Peter wants to run after him. But Jesus raises his head and says: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye love one another. By this shall it be known that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And only then did Simon Peter and the other ten understand what Jesus had done. Only then did they understand that having all his life long shown them

an example of love of one's neighbour, he has now given an example of love of one's enemy.

To the last moment he loved and pitied Judas, his enemy, called him to himself and despite his unrepentance saved him from the anger of the disciples.

PART IV

ON TRUTH IN ART

Preface to a Miscellany, "The Flower Garden," for Children.

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. xii, 34–37.)

In this book besides stories in which true occurrences are narrated there are also stories, traditions, proverbs, legends, fables, and fairy tales, that have been composed and written for man's benefit.

We have chosen such as we consider to be in accord with Christ's teaching, and therefore regard as good and truthful.

Many people, especially children, when reading a story, fairy-tale, legend, or fable, ask first of all: "Is it true?" and if they see that what is described could not have happened, they often say: "Oh, this is mere fancy, it isn't true."

Those who judge so, judge amiss.

Truth will be known not by him who knows only what has been, is, and really happens, but by him who recognizes what should be, according to the will of God.

He does not write the truth who describes only what has happened, and what this or that man has done, but he who shows what people do that is right, that is, in accord with

God's will, and what people do wrong, that is, contrary to God's will.

Truth is a path. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

And so he will not know the truth who looks down at his feet, but he who discerns by the sun which way to go.

All verbal compositions are good and necessary not when they describe what has happened, but when they show what ought to be; not when they tell what people have done, but when they set a value on what is good and evil—when they show men the narrow path of God's will, which leads to life.

And in order to show that path one must not describe merely what happens in the world. The world abides in evil and is full of offence. If one is to describe the world as it is, one will describe much evil and the truth will be lacking. In order that there may be truth in what one describes, it is necessary to write not about what is, but about what should be; to write not the truth of what is, but of the kingdom of God which is drawing nigh unto us, but is not as yet. That is why there are mountains of books in which we are told what really has happened or might have happened, yet they are all false if those who write them do not themselves know what is good and what is evil, and do not know and do not show the one path which leads to the kingdom of God. And there are fairy-tales, parables, fables, legends in which marvellous things are described which never happened, or ever could happen, and these legends, fairy-tales and fables are true because they show wherein the will of God has always been, and is, and will be: they show the truth of the kingdom of God.

There may be a book, and there are indeed many novels and stories, that describe how a man lives for his passions, suffers, torments others, endures danger and want, schemes, struggles with others, escapes from his poverty, and at last is

united with the object of his love and becomes distinguished, rich, and happy. Such a book, even if everything described in it really happened, and though there were in it nothing improbable, would nevertheless be false and untrue, because a man who lives for himself and his passions, however beautiful his wife may be and however distinguished and rich he becomes, cannot be happy.

And there may be a legend of how Christ and his apostles walked on earth and went to a rich man, and the rich man would not receive him, and they went to a poor widow, and she received him. And then he commanded a barrel full of gold to roll to the rich man and sent a wolf to the poor widow to eat up her last calf, and it might prove a blessing for the widow, and be bad for the rich man.

Such a story is totally improbable, because nothing of what is described ever happened or could happen; but it may all be true because in it is shown what always should be—what is good and what is evil, and what a man should strive after in order to do the will of God.

No matter what wonders are described, or what animals may talk in human language, what flying carpets may carry people from place to place, the legends, parables, or fairy-tales will be true if there is in them the truth of the kingdom of God. And if that truth is lacking, then everything described, however well attested, will be false, because it lacks the truth of the kingdom of God. Christ himself spoke in parables, and his parables have remained eternally true. He only added, "Take heed, how ye hear."

PART V[1]

WHAT IS TRUTH?

It was in 1890 that N. N. Gay painted the well-known picture of Tolstoy in his room at Yásnaya Polyána.

The picture which aroused most interest at Yasnáya that year, however, was not a portrait of Tolstoy, but Gay's "What is Truth?" which had been exhibited in Petersburg early in the year and prohibited. After being exhibited privately, Gay brought it to show to Tolstoy, on whom it made a deep impression.

Already in January, when Gay had sent him a drawing of it, Tolstoy had written to him:

"I am always thinking about you and your picture. I am longing to hear how it is received. I am troubled over the figure of Pilate which, with that arm, seems wrong somehow. I don't say it is, I only ask. If the connoisseurs say that that figure is correct, I shall be satisfied. About the rest I know, and have no need to ask anyone's opinion."

Though Tolstoy knew very well that Pilate's arm was not well drawn, he was immensely pleased with the treatment of the subject and the thought and feeling expressed. Feinermann tells us:

"Leo Tolstoy, when he saw that painting, was so shaken and agitated that for days after he could hardly speak of anything else.

'I am in raptures,' he said. 'That's a master! I confess that I myself only now understand the deep and true meaning of that short passage which always appeared to me, as it has to all the Bible commentators, unfinished and abrupt. Pilate asked, "What is Truth?" and then went out to the crowd without waiting for a reply. And everybody reads

[1] From *The Life of Tolstoy* Vol II, by Aylmer Maude.

"WHAT IS TRUTH?"

After a painting by N. N. Gay, 1890

and understands it that way. But this picture gives a different interpretation. Pilate does not *ask* what truth is, expecting a reply. No! in the form of a question he contemptuously *replies!* When Christ says that he has come into the world as a witness of Truth, Pilate with a laugh and a contemptuous gesture throws the words carelessly at him: "And what *is* Truth? Truth is a relative thing; everybody takes it his own way!" and, evidently considering his retort decisive, he went out to the crowd. That is the light in which the moment is seized. It is new, it is profound, and how strongly and clearly the picture expresses it! That fat shaven neck of the Roman Governor, that half-turned, large, well-fed, sensual body, that out-stretched arm with its gesture of contempt—are all splendid—it is alive. It breathes and impresses itself on the memory for ever. And the face . . . Together with all the dignity of that Roman figure there goes a slavish anxiety about himself: the mean trepidation of a petty soul. He is afraid he may be denounced at Rome . . . And this smallness of soul is wonderfully caught by Gay, and notwithstanding the toga, and his height, and his majestic pose, Pilate appears so petty before the wornout sufferer who has undergone during the night arrest, judgment, and insults. . . . A wonderful picture! That is the way to paint!'

"Gay, touched and deeply moved by Tolstoy's delight, embraced and kissed him, and said: 'Do not praise it . . . You will praise me so that I shall become proud. I am afraid of that. . . . I shan't be able to paint!' "

PART VI

INTRODUCTION TO AMIEL'S "JOURNAL."

About eighteen months ago I chanced for the first time to read Amiel's book, *Fragments d'un journal intime.* I was struck by the importance and profundity of its contents, the beauty of its presentation, and above all by the sincerity of this book.

While reading it I marked the passages which specially struck me. My daughter [1] undertook to translate these passages and in this way these extracts from *Fragments d'un journal intime* were formed: that is to say, they are extracts from the whole many-volumed diary Amiel wrote day by day during thirty years, much of which remained unprinted.

Henri Amiel was born at Geneva in 1821, and was soon left an orphan. Having completed a course of higher education at Geneva, Amiel went abroad and spent some years at the universities of Heidelberg and Berlin. Returning in 1849 to his native land he, a young man of 28, obtained a professorship at the Geneva Academy, first of Esthetics and afterwards of Philosophy, which he held till his death.

Amiel's whole life was passed at Geneva, where he died in 1881, in no way distinguished from the large number of those ordinary professors who, mechanically compiling their lectures from the latest books on their specialities, pass them on in an equally mechanical way to their hearers, and from the yet greater number of writers of verse lacking in sub-

[1] That is, Márya Lvóvna, Tolstoy's second daughter, who was devoted both to her father and to his teachings.

stance, who supply these wares, which though no one needs them are still sold by tens of thousands in the periodicals that are published.

Amiel had not the slightest success either in the academic or literary field. When he was already approaching old age he wrote of himself as follows:

"What have I been able to extract from the gifts bestowed upon me, and from the special circumstances of my life of half-a-century? What have I drawn from my soil? Is all my scribbling collected together—my correspondence, *these thousands of sincere pages,* my lectures, my articles, my verses, my various memoranda—anything but a collection of dry leaves? To whom and for what have I been of use? And will my name live for even a day after me, and will it have any meaning for anyone? An insignificant, empty life! *Vie nulle!*"

Two well-known French authors have written on Amiel and his *Journal* since his death—his friend, the well-known critic, E. Scherer, and the philosopher Caro. It is interesting to note the sympathetic but rather patronizing tone in which both these writers refer to Amiel, regretting that he lacked the qualities necessary for the production of real works. Yet the real works of these two writers—the critical works of Scherer and the philosophical works of Caro—will hardly long outlive their authors, while the accidental, unreal work of Amiel, his *Journal,* will always remain a living book, needed by men and fruitfully affecting them.

For a writer is precious and necessary for us only to the extent to which he reveals to us the inner labour of his soul —supposing, of course, that his work is new and has not been done before. Whatever he may write—a play, a learned work, a story, a philosophic treatise, lyric verse, a criticism, a satire—what is precious to us in an author's work is only that inner labour of his soul, and not the architectural struc-

ture in which usually, and I think always, distorting it, he packs his thoughts and feelings.

All that Amiel poured into a ready mould: his lectures, treatises, poems, are dead; but his *Journal,* where, without thinking of the form, he only talked to himself, is full of life, wisdom, instruction, consolation, and will ever remain one of those best of all books which have been left to us accidentally by such men as Marcus Aurelius, Pascal, and Epictetus.

Pascal says: "There are only three kinds of people: those who, having found God, serve Him; those who, not having found Him, are engaged in seeking Him, and those who, though they have not found Him, do not seek Him.

"The first are sensible and happy; the last are senseless and unhappy; the second are unhappy, but sensible."

I think that the contrast Pascal makes between the first and the second groups, between those who, as he says in another place, having found God, serve Him with their whole heart, and those who, not having found Him, seek Him with their whole heart, is not only not so great as he thought, but does not exist at all. I think that those who with their whole heart and with suffering (*en gémissant,* as Pascal says) seek God, are already serving Him. They are serving Him because by the suffering they endure in their search they are laying, and revealing to others, the road to God, as Pascal himself did in his *Pensées,* and as Amiel did all his life in his *Journal.*

Amiel's whole life, as presented to us in this *Journal,* is full of this suffering and whole-hearted search for God. And the contemplation of this search is the more instructive because it never ceases to be a search, never becomes settled, and never passes into a consciousness of having attained the truth, or into a teaching. Amiel is not saying either to himself or to others, "I now know the truth—hear me!" On the

contrary it seems to him, as is natural to one who is sincerely seeking truth, that the more he knows the more he needs to know, and he unceasingly does all he can to learn more and more of truth, and is therefore constantly aware of his ignorance. He is continually speculating on what Christianity and the condition of a Christian should be, never for a moment pausing on the thought that Christianity is the very thing that he is professing, and that he is himself realizing the condition of a Christian. And yet the whole *Journal* is full of expressions of the most profound Christian understanding and feeling. And these expressions act on the reader with special force just by their unconsciousness and sincerity. He is talking to himself, not thinking that he is overheard, neither attempting to appear convinced of what he is not convinced of, nor hiding his sufferings and his search.

It is as if one were present without a man's knowledge at the most secret, profound, impassioned inner working of his soul, usually hidden from an outsider's view.

And therefore while one may find many more shapely and elegant expressions of religious feeling than Amiel's, it is difficult to find any more intimate or more heart-searching. Not long before his death, knowing that his illness might any day end in strangulation, he wrote:

"When you no longer dream that you have at your disposal tens of years, a year, or a month, when you already reckon in tens of hours and the coming night brings with it the menace of the unknown, obviously one renounces art, science, politics, and is content to talk with oneself, and that is possible up to the very end. This inner conversation is the only thing left to him who is sentenced to death but whose execution is delayed. He (this condemned man) concentrates within himself. He no longer emits rays, but only talks with his own soul. He no longer acts, but contemplates . . . Like

a hare he returns to his lair, and that lair is his conscience, his thought. As long as he can hold a pen and has a moment of solitude he concentrates before that echo of himself, and holds converse with God.

"This is however not a moral investigation, not a repentance, not an appeal; it is only an 'Amen' of submission.

" 'My child, give me thine heart.'

"Renunciation and agreement are less difficult for me than for others, because I want nothing. I should only like not to suffer. Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane prayed for that same thing. Let us say with him: 'Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done!' and let us wait."

Such was he on the eve of his death. He is not less sincere and serious throughout his *Journal,* in spite of the elegance, and (in passages) apparent choiceness of his phrasing, which had become a habit with him. In the course of the whole thirty years of his *Journal* he felt what we all so carefully forget—that we are all sentenced to death and our execution is only deferred. And that is why this book is so sincere, serious, and useful.

PART VII

INTRODUCTION TO S. T. SEMËNOV'S PEASANT STORIES

I LONG ago laid down for myself the rule of judging every artistic production from three aspects, first from the side of its content; in how far is that which the artist reveals from a new side important and necessary for man; for any production is, I think, a work of art only if it reveals a new side of life: secondly, in how far is the form of the work good, beautiful, and in accord with its contents: and thirdly, to what extent is the relation of the artist to his subject sincere, that is, in how far does he believe in what he presents to us. This last quality always seems to me the most important in artistic work. It gives its force to a work of art, and makes it infectious, that is, it evokes in the spectator, the hearer, or the reader those feelings which the artist himself experiences.

And Semënov possesses that quality in the highest degree.

There is a well-known story of Flaubert's which Turgenev has translated, *La légende de Julien l'hospitalier;* the last episode, intended to be the most touching in the story, is one in which Julien lies down in the same bed with a leper and warms him with his own body. This leper is Christ, who carries off Julien to heaven with him. All this is told with great mastery, but I always remain perfectly cold when I read that story. I feel that the author himself would not have done and would not even have wished to do what his hero does, and therefore I myself do not wish to do it and do not experience any agitation at reading of this amazing exploit.

But Semënov describes the simplest story and it always

touches me. A village youth comes to Moscow to find a place and, helped by a coachman from his part of the country who is living with a rich merchant, he gets a job as the yard-porter's assistant. This place had previously been held by an old man. The merchant, by his coachman's advice, had discharged the old man and taken the lad in his place. The lad comes in the evening to begin his service, and standing in the yard he hears the old man complain in the porter's lodge that through no fault of his he has been dismissed, merely to give place to a younger man. The lad suddenly feels pity for the old man and is ashamed to have pushed him out. He considers the matter, hesitates, and finally decides to give up the situation which he needs so much and would have been so glad to take.

All this is told in such a way that every time I read it I feel that the author would not only have wished to, but certainly would, have acted in that way under similar circumstances; his feelings infect me and I feel pleased, and it seems to me that I too should have done, or have been ready to do, something good.

Sincerity is Semënov's chief merit. But besides that, his content is always important: important because it relates to the most important class in Russia, the peasantry, whom Semënov knows as only a peasant can know them who himself lives in the laborious village; and the content of his stories is also important because, in them all, the chief interest is not in external events or in the peculiarity of the life, but in the way men approach or fall away from the ideal of Christian truth, which is present clearly and firmly in the author's soul and supplies him with a safe standard and appraisement of the quality and importance of human actions. The form of the stories fully corresponds to their content: it is serious and simple, the details are always correct, and there

are no false notes. What is particularly good is the language, often quite original in its expressions, but always natural and strikingly strong and picturesque, in which the characters of the story speak.

PART VIII

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKS OF GUY DE MAUPASSANT

(This article was written by Tolstoy in 1894, to serve as preface to a Russian edition of a selection of Guy de Maupassant's stories.)

It was, I think, in 1881 that Turgénev while visiting me took out of his portmanteau a small French book entitled *La Maison Tellier,* and gave it to me.

"Read it some time," said he in an off-hand way just as, a year before, he had given me a number of *Russian Wealth* that contained an article by Gárshin, who was then only beginning to write. Evidently on this occasion, as in Gárshin's case, he was afraid of influencing me one way or the other and wished to know my own unbiassed opinion.

"It is by a young French writer," said he. "Have a look at it. It isn't bad. He knows you and appreciates you highly," he added as if wishing to propitiate me. "As a man he reminds me of Druzhínin. He is, like Druzhínin, an excellent son, an admirable friend, *un homme d'un commerce sûr,*[1] and, besides that, he associates with the working people, guides them, and helps them. Even in his relations with women he reminds me of Druzhínin." And Turgénev told me something astonishing, incredible, of Maupassant's conduct in that respect.

That time (1881) was for me a period of most ardent inner reconstruction of my whole outlook on life, and in this reconstruction the activity called the fine arts, to which I had formerly devoted all my powers, had not only lost the im-

[1] A reliable man.

portance I formerly attributed to it, but had become simply obnoxious to me on account of the unnatural position it had hitherto occupied in my life, as it does generally in the estimation of the people of the well-to-do classes.

And therefore such works as the one Turgénev was recommending to me did not then interest me in the least. But to please him I read the book he had handed me.

From the first story, *La Maison Tellier,* despite the indecency and insignificance of the subject of the story, I could not help recognizing that the author had what is called talent.

He possessed that particular gift called talent, which consists in the capacity to direct intense concentrated attention according to the author's tastes on this or that subject, in consequence of which the man endowed with this capacity sees in the things to which he directs his attention some new aspect which others have overlooked; and this gift of seeing what others have not seen Maupassant evidently possessed. But judging by the little volume I read, he unfortunately lacked the chief of the three conditions, besides talent, essential to a true work of art. These are: (1) a correct, that is, a moral relation of the author to his subject; (2) clearness of expression, or beauty of form,—the two are identical; and (3) sincerity, that is, a sincere feeling of love or hatred of what the artist depicts. Of these three, Maupassant possessed only the two last and was quite lacking in the first. He had not a correct, that is a moral, relation to the subjects depicted.

Judging by what I read I was convinced that Maupassant possessed talent, that is to say, the gift of attention revealing in the objects and facts of life with which he deals qualities others have not perceived. He was also master of a beautiful style, expressing what he wanted to say clearly, simply, and with charm. He was also master of that condition of true artistic production without which a work of art does not produce its effect, namely, sincerity; that is, he did

not pretend that he loved or hated, but really loved or hated what he described. But unfortunately lacking the first and perhaps the chief condition of worthy artistic production, a correct moral relation to what he described—that is to say, a knowledge of the difference between good and evil—he loved and described things that should not have been loved and described. Thus, in this little volume, the author described with great detail and fondness how women seduce men, and men women; and in *La femme de Paul* he even describes certain obscenities difficult to understand. And he presents the country labouring folk not merely with indifference but even with contempt, as though they were animals.

This unconsciousness of the difference between good and evil is particularly striking in the story, *Une partie de campagne,* in which is given, as a very pleasant and amusing joke, a detailed description of how two men rowing with bare arms in a boat tempt and afterwards seduce at the same time, one of them an elderly mother and the other a young girl, her daughter.

The sympathy of the author is evidently all the time so much on the side of these two wretches that he not merely ignores, but simply does not see, what must have been felt by the seduced mother and the maid (her daughter), by the father, and by a young man who is evidently engaged to the daughter; and therefore, not merely is an objectionable description of a revolting crime presented in the form of an amusing jest, but the occurrence itself is described falsely, for what is given is only one side, and that the most insignificant —namely, the pleasure received by the rascals.

In that same little volume there is a story, *Histoire d'une fille de ferme,* which Turgénev particularly recommended to me and which particularly displeased me, again by this incorrect relation of the author to his subject. He evidently sees in all the working folk he describes mere animals, who

rise to nothing more than sexual and maternal love, so that his descriptions give one an incomplete and artificial impression.

Lack of understanding of the life and interests of working people and the presentation of them as semi-brutes moved only by sensuality, spite, and greed, is one of the chief and most important defects of most recent French writers, including Maupassant, who not only in this but in all his other stories where he refers to the people, always describes them as coarse, dull animals at whom one can only laugh. Of course the French writers should know the nature of their own people better than I do; but despite the fact that I am a Russian and have not lived among the French peasants, I nevertheless affirm that in so representing their people the French authors are wrong, and that the French labourers cannot be such as they represent them to be. If France—such as we know her, with her truly great men and the great contributions those great men have made to science, art, citizenship, and the moral development of mankind—if this France exists, then that working class which has maintained and maintains on its shoulders this France with its great men, must consist not of brutes but of people with great spiritual qualities, and I therefore do not believe what I read in novels such as *La terre* [1] and in Maupassant's stories; just as I should not believe it if I were told of the existence of a beautiful house standing without foundations. It may very well be these high qualities of the people are not such as are described to us in *La petite Fadette* and *La mère aux diables,*[2] but I am firmly convinced that these qualities exist, and a writer who portrays the people only as Maupassant does, describing with sympathy only the *hanches* and *gorges* [3] of the Breton servant-

[1] By Zola.
[2] Stories by Georges Sand.
[3] Hips and throats.

girls and describing with detestation and ridicule the life of the labouring men, commits a great artistic mistake, because he describes his subject only from one, and that the least interesting, physical, side and leaves quite out of sight another, and the most important, spiritual, side wherein the essence of the matter lies.

On the whole, the perusal of the little book handed me by Turgénev left me quite indifferent to the young writer.

So repugnant to me were the stories, *Une partie de campagne, La femme de Paul, L'historie d'une fille de ferme,* that I did not then notice the beautiful story, *Le papa de Simon,* and the story, excellent in its description of the night, *Sur l'eau.*

"Are there not in our time, when so many people want to write, plenty of men of talent who do not know to what to apply this gift, or who boldly apply it to what should not, and need not, be described?" thought I. And so I said to Turgénev, and thereupon forgot about Maupassant.

The first thing of his that fell into my hands after that was *Une Vie,* which someone advised me to read. That book at once compelled me to change my opinion of Maupassant, and since then I have read with interest everything signed by him. *Une Vie* is excellent, not only incomparably the best of his novels, but perhaps the best French novel since Hugo's *Les Misérables.* Here, besides remarkable talent—that special strenuous attention applied to the subject, by which the author perceives quite new features in the life he describes—are united in almost equal degree all three qualities of a true, work of art, first, a correct, that is a moral, relation of the author to his subject; secondly, beauty of form; and thirdly, sincerity, that is, love of what the author describes. Here the meaning of life no longer presents itself to the author as consisting in the adventures of various male and female libertines; here the subject, as the title indicates, is life—the

life of a ruined, innocent, amiable woman, predisposed to all that is good, but ruined by precisely the same coarse animal sensuality which in his former stories the author presented as if it were the central feature of life, dominant over all else. And in this book the author's whole sympathy is on the side of what is good.

The form, which was beautiful in the first stories, is here brought to such a pitch of perfection as, in my opinion, has been attained by no other French writer of prose. And above all, the author here really loves, and deeply loves, the good family he describes; and he really hates that coarse debauchee, who destroys the happiness and peace of that charming family and, in particular, ruins the life of the heroine.

That is why all the events and characters of this novel are so life-like and memorable. The weak, kindly, debilitated mother; the upright, weak, attractive father; the daughter, still more attractive in her simplicity, artlessness, and sympathy with all that is good; their mutual relations, their first journey, their servants and neighbours; the calculating, grossly sensual, mean, petty, insolent suitor, who as usual deceives the innocent girl by the customary empty idealization of the foulest instincts; the marriage, Corsica with the beautiful descriptions of nature, and then village life, the husband's coarse faithlessness, his seizure of power over the property, his quarrel with his father-in-law, the yielding of the good people and the victory of insolence; the relations with the neighbours—all this is life itself in its complexity and variety. And not only is all this vividly and finely described, but the sincere pathetic tone of it all involuntarily infects the reader. One feels that the author loves this woman, and loves her not for her external form but for her soul, for the goodness there is in her; that he pities her and suffers on her account, and this feeling is involuntarily communicated to the reader. And the questions: Why, for what end, is this

fine creature ruined? Ought it indeed to be so? arise of themselves in the reader's soul, and compel him to reflect on the meaning of human life.

Despite the false notes which occur in the novel, such as the minute description of the young girl's skin, or the impossible and unnecessary details of how, by the advice of an abbé, the forsaken wife again became a mother—details which destroy all the charm of the heroine's purity—and despite the melodramatic and unnatural story of the injured husband's revenge; notwithstanding these blemishes, the novel not only seemed to me excellent, but I saw behind it no longer a talented chatterer and jester who neither knew nor wished to know right from wrong—as from his first little book Maupassant had appeared to me to be—but a serious man penetrating deeply into life and already beginning to see his way in it.

The next novel of Maupassant's that I read was *Bel-Ami.*

Bel-Ami is a very dirty book. The author evidently gives himself a free hand in describing what attracts him, and at times seems to lose his main negative attitude towards his hero and to pass over to his side: but on the whole *Bel-Ami,* like *Une Vie,* has at its base a serious idea and sentiment. In *Une Vie* the fundamental idea is perplexity in face of the cruel meaninglessness of the suffering life of an excellent woman ruined by a man's coarse sensuality; whereas here it is not only perplexity, but indignation, at the prosperity and success of a coarse, sensual brute who by that very sensuality makes his career and attains a high position in society; and indignation also at the depravity of the whole sphere in which the hero attains his success. In the former novel the author seems to ask: "For what, and why, was a fine creature ruined? Why did it happen?" Here in the latter novel he seems to answer: all that is pure and good has perished and is perishing in our society, because that society is depraved, senseless, and horrible.

The last scene in the novel—the marriage in a fashionable church of the triumphant scoundrel, decorated with the Legion of Honour, to the pure girl, the daughter of an elderly and formerly irreproachable mother whom he had seduced; a wedding blessed by a bishop and regarded as something good and proper by everybody—expresses this idea with extraordinary force. In this novel, despite the fact that it is encumbered with dirty details (in which it is to be regretted that the author seems to find pleasure) the same serious demands are presented to life.

Read the conversation of the old poet with Duroy when after dinner, if I remember rightly, they are leaving the Walters. The old poet bares life to his young companion, and shows it as it is, with its eternal and inevitable concomitant and end—death.

"She has hold of me already, *la gueuse,*" [1] says he of death. "She has already shaken out my teeth, torn out my hair, crippled my limbs, and is now ready to swallow me. I am already in her power. She is only playing with me, as a cat does with a mouse, knowing that I cannot escape. Fame? Riches? What is the use of them, since they cannot buy a woman's love? For it is only a woman's love that makes life worth living, and that too death takes away. It takes that away, and then one's health, strength, and life itself. It is the same for everyone, and there is nothing else."

Such is the meaning of what the old poet says. But Duroy, the successful lover of all the women who please him, is so full of sensual energy and strength that he hears and does not hear, understands and does not understand, the old poet's words. He hears and understands, but the source of sensual life throbs in him so strongly that this unquestionable truth, foretelling the same end for him, does not disturb him.

This inner contradiction, besides its satirical value, gives

[1] The old hag.

the novel its chief significance. The same idea gleams in the fine scenes of the death of the consumptive journalist. The author sets himself the question: What is this life? How solve the contradiction between the love of life, and the knowledge of inevitable death? He seems to seek, pauses, and does not decide either one way or the other. And therefore the moral relation to life in this novel continues to be correct.

But in the novels that follow, this moral relation to life grows confused. The appraisement of the phenomena of life begins to waver, to grow obscure, and in the last novels it is quite perverted.

In *Mont-Oriol* Maupassant seems to unite the motives of his two previous novels and repeats himself to order. Despite the fine descriptions of the fashionable watering-place and of the medical activity in it, which is executed with delicate taste, we have here the same bull-like Paul, just as empty and despicable as the husband in *Une Vie;* and the same deceived, frank, meek, weak, lonely—always lonely—good woman, and the same impassive triumph of pettiness and triviality as in *Bel-Ami.*

The thought is the same, but the author's moral relation to what he describes is already much lower, lower especially than in *Une Vie.* The author's inner appraisement of right and wrong begins to get confused. Notwithstanding his abstract wish to be impartially objective, the scoundrel Paul evidently has all his sympathy, and therefore the love story of this Paul and his attempts at and success in seduction produce a discordant impression. The reader does not know what the author intends: is it to show the whole emptiness and vileness of Paul (who turns indifferently away from, and insults, a woman merely because her waist has been spoilt by her pregnancy with his child); or, on the con-

trary, is it to show how pleasant and easy it is to live as this Paul lives?

In the next novels, *Pierre et Jean, Fort comme la mort,* and *Notre cœur,* the author's moral attitude towards his characters becomes still more confused, and in the last-named is quite lost. All these novels bear the stamp of indifference, haste, unreality, and, above all, again that same absence of a correct moral relation to life which was present in his first writings. This began from the time when Maupassant's reputation as a fashionable author had become established and he became liable to the temptation, so terrible in our day, to which every celebrated writer is subject, especially one so attractive as Maupassant. In the first place the success of his first novels, the praise of the press, and the flattery of society, especially of women; in the second the ever increasing amount of remuneration (never however keeping up with his continually increasing wants); in the third the pertinacity of editors outbidding one another, flattering, begging, and no longer judging the merits of the works the author offers but enthusiastically accepting everything signed by a name now established with the public. All these temptations are so great that they evidently turn his head, and he succumbs to them; and though he continues to elaborate the form of his work as well as or sometimes even better than before, and even though he is fond of what he describes, yet he no longer loves it because it is good or moral and lovable to all, or hates it because it is evil and hateful to all, but only because one thing pleases and another thing happens to displease him.

On all Maupassant's novels, beginning with *Bel-Ami,* there lies this stamp of haste and still more of artificiality. From that time Maupassant no longer did what he had done in his first two novels. He did not take as his basis certain

moral demands and on that ground describe the actions of his characters, but wrote as all hack novelists do, that is, he devised the most interesting and pathetic, or most up-to-date persons and situations, and made a novel out of them, adorning it with whatever observations he had opportunity to make which fitted into the framework of the story, quite indifferent as to how the incidents described were related to the demands of morality. Such are *Pierre et Jean, Fort comme la mort,* and *Notre cœur.*

Accustomed as we are to read in French novels of how families live in threes, always with a lover known to everyone except the husband, it still remains quite unintelligible to us how it happens that all husbands are always fools, *cocus et ridicules,*[1] but all lovers (who themselves in the end marry and become husbands) are not only not *cocus et ridicules,* but are heroic! And still less comprehensible is it how all women can be depraved, and yet all mothers saintly.

And on these unnatural and unlikely, and above all profoundly immoral, propositions *Pierre et Jean* and *Fort comme la mort* are built, and therefore the sufferings of the characters so situated affect us but little. The mother of Pierre and Jean, who can live her whole life deceiving her husband, evokes little sympathy when she is obliged to confess her sin to her son, and still less when she justifies herself by asserting that she could not but avail herself of the chance of happiness which presented itself. Still less can we sympathize with the gentleman who, in *Fort comme la mort,* having all his life deceived his friend and debauched his friend's wife, now only regrets that having grown old he cannot seduce his mistress's daughter. The last novel, *Notre cœur,* has even no kernel at all beyond the description of various kinds of sex-love. The satiated emotions of an idle debauchee are

[1] Deceived and ridiculous.

described, who does not know what he wants, and who first lives with a woman yet more depraved than himself—a mentally depraved woman, who lacks even the excuse of sensuality—then leaves her and lives with a servant girl, and then again rejoins the former, and, it seems, lives with them both. If in *Pierre et Jean* and *Fort comme la mort* there are still some touching scenes, this last novel excites only disgust.

The question in Maupassant's first novel, *Une Vie,* consists in this: here is a human being, good, wise, pleasing, ready for all that is good, and this creature is for some reason offered up as a sacrifice first to a coarse, small-minded, stupid animal of a husband, without having given anything to the world. Why is this? The author puts that question and as it were gives no answer, but his whole novel, all his feeling of pity for her and abhorrence of what has ruined her, serves as answer. If there is a man who has understood her suffering and expressed it, then it is redeemed, as Job put it to his friends when they said that no one would know of his sufferings. When suffering is recognized and understood, it is redeemed; and here the author has recognized and understood and shown men this suffering, and the suffering is redeemed, for once it is understood by men it will sooner or later be done away with.

In the next novel, *Bel-Ami,* the question no longer is, Why do good persons suffer? but Why do wealth and fame go to the unworthy? What are wealth and fame? How are they obtained? And as before, these questions carry with them their own answers, which consist in the repudiation of all that the crowd of men so highly prize. The subject of this second novel is still serious, but the moral relation of the author to the subject he describes already weakens considerably, and whereas in the first novel blots and sensuality which

spoil it only appear here and there, in *Bel-Ami* these blots have increased and many chapters are filled with dirt alone, which seems to please the author.

In the next book, *Mont-Oriol,* the questions: Why, and to what end, does the amiable woman suffer and the savage male secure success and happiness? are no longer put; but it seems tacitly admitted that it should be so, and hardly any moral demands are felt. But without the least necessity, uncalled for by any artistic consideration, dirty sensual descriptions are presented. As an example of this violation of artistic taste, resulting from the author's incorrect relation to his subject, the detailed description in this novel of the heroine in her bath is specially striking. This description is quite unnecessary, and is in no way connected either with the external or the inner purpose of the novel: "Bubbles appear on her pink skin."

"Well, what of that?" asks the reader.

"Nothing more," replies the author. "I describe it because I like such descriptions."

In the next novels, *Pierre et Jean* and *Fort comme la mort,* no moral demand at all is perceptible. Both novels are built on debauchery, deceit, and falsehood, which bring the actors to tragic situations.

In the last novel, *Notre cœur,* the position of the actors is most monstrous, wild, and immoral; they no longer struggle with anything, but only seek satisfaction for their vanity, sensuality, and sexual desires; and the author appears quite to sympathize with their aims. The only deduction one can draw from this last novel is that the greatest pleasure in life consists in sexual intercourse, and that therefore one must secure that happiness in the pleasantest way.

Yet more striking is this immoral relation to life in the half-novel, *Yvette.* The subject, which is horrible in its immorality, is as follows: A charming girl, innocent in soul

and depraved only in the manners she has learned in her mother's dissolute circle, leads a libertine into error. He falls in love with her, but imagining that this girl knowingly chatters the obscene nonsense she has picked up in her mother's society and repeats parrot-like without understanding—imagining that she is already depraved—he coarsely offers her an immoral union. This proposal horrifies and offends her (for she loves him); it opens her eyes to her own position and to that of her mother, and she suffers profoundly. This deeply touching scene is admirably described: the collision between a beautiful innocent soul and the depravity of the world. And with that it might end; but the author, without either external or inner necessity, continues to write and makes this man penetrate by night to the girl and seduce her. Evidently in the first part of the story the author was on the girl's side, but in the later part he has suddenly gone over to the debauchee, and the one impression destroys the other—the whole novel crumbles and falls to pieces like ill-kneaded bread.

In all his novels after *Bel-Ami* (I am not now speaking of the short stories, which constitute his chief merit and glory—of them later) Maupassant evidently submitted to the theory which ruled not only in his circle in Paris, but which now rules everywhere among artists: that for a work of art it is not only unnecessary to have any clear conception of what is right and wrong, but that, on the contrary, an artist should completely ignore all moral questions, there being even a certain artistic merit in so doing. According to this theory the artist may or should depict what is true to life, what really is, what is beautiful and therefore pleases him, or even what may be useful as material for "science"; but that to care about what is moral or immoral, right or wrong, is not an artist's business.

I remember a celebrated painter showing me one of his

pictures representing a religious procession. It was all excellently painted, but no relation of the artist to his subject was perceptible.

"And do you regard these ceremonies as good and consider that they should be performed, or not?" I asked him.

With some condescension to my naïveté, he told me that he did not know about that and did not want to know it; his business was to represent *life*.

"But at any rate you sympathize with this?"

"I cannot say so."

"Well then do you dislike these ceremonies?"

"Neither the one thing nor the other," replied, with a smile of compassion at my silliness, this modern, highly cultured artist who depicted life without understanding its purpose and neither loving nor hating its phenomena.

And so unfortunately thought Maupassant.

In his preface to *Pierre et Jean* he says that people say to a writer, *"Consolez-moi, amusez-moi, attristez-moi, attendrissez-moi, faites-moi rêver, faites-moi rire, faites-moi frémir, faites-moi pleurer, faites-moi penser. Seuls quelques esprits d'élites demandent à l'artiste: faites-moi quelque chose de beau dans la forme qui vous conviendra le mieux d'après votre tempérament."* [1]

Responding to this demand of the *élite* Maupassant wrote his novels, naïvely imagining that what was considered beautiful in his circle was that beauty which art should serve.

And in the circle in which Maupassant moved, the beauty which should be served by art was, and is, chiefly woman—young, pretty, and for the most part naked—and sexual con-

[1] "Console me, amuse me, sadden me, touch my heart, make me dream, make me laugh, make me tremble, make me weep, make me think. Only a few chosen spirits bid the artist compose something beautiful, in the form that best suits his temperament."

nection with her. It was so considered not only by all Maupassant's comrades in art—painters, sculptors, novelists, and poets—but also by philosophers, the teachers of the rising generation. Thus the famous Renan, in his work, *Marc Aurèle,* p. 555, when blaming Christianity for not understanding feminine beauty, plainly says:

"La défaut du christianisme apparaît bien ici. Il est trop uniquement moral; la beauté, chez lui, est tout-à-fait sacrifiée. Or, aux yeux d'une philosophie complète, la beauté, loin d'être un avantage superficiel, un danger, un inconvénient, est un don de Dieu, comme la vertu. Elle vaut la vertu; la femme belle exprime aussi bien une face du but divin, une des fins de Dieu, que l'homme de génie ou la femme vertueuse. Elle le sent et de là sa fierté. Elle sent instinctivement le trésor infini qu'elle porte en son corps; elle sait bien que, sans esprit, sans talent, sans grande vertu, elle compte entre les premières manifestations de Dieu. Et pourquoi lui interdire de mettre en valeur le don qui lui a été fait, de sertir le diamant qui lui est échu? La femme, en se parant, accomplit un devoir; elle pratique un art, art exquis, en un sens le plus charmant des arts. Ne nous laissons pas égarer par le sourire que certain mots provoquent chez LES GENS FRIVOLES. *On décerne le palme du génie à l'artiste grec qui a su résoudre le plus délicat des problèmes, orner le corps humain, c'est à dire orner la perfection même, et l'on ne veut voir qu'une affaire de chiffons dans l'essai de collaborer à la plus belle œuvre de Dieu, à la beauté de la femme! La toilette de la femme, avec tous ses raffinements est du grand art à sa manière. Les siècles et les pays qui savent y réussir sont les grands siécles, les grands pays, et le christianisme montra, par l'exclusion dont il frappa ce genre de recherches, que l'idéal social qu'il concevait ne deviendrait le cadre d'une société complète que bien plus tard, quand la révolte des*

gens du monde aurait brisé le joug étroit imposé primitivement à la secte par un piétisme exalté." [1]

(So that in the opinion of this leader of the young generation only now have Paris milliners and coiffeurs corrected the mistake committed by Christianity, and re-established beauty in the true and lofty position due to it.)

In order that there should be no doubt as to how one is to understand beauty, the same celebrated writer, historian, and savant wrote the drama, *L'Abbesse de Jouarre,* in which he showed that to have sexual intercourse with a woman is a service of this beauty, that is to say, is an elevated and good action. In that drama, which is striking by its lack of talent and especially by the coarseness of the conversations between d'Arcy and the abbesse, in which the first words make it evident what sort of love that gentleman is discussing with the supposedly innocent and highly moral maiden, who is not in the least offended thereby—in that drama it is shown that

[1]The defect of Christianity is clearly seen in this. It is too exclusively moral; it quite sacrifices beauty. But in the eyes of a complete philosophy beauty, far from being a superficial advantage, a danger, an inconvenience, is a gift of God, like virtue. It is worth as much as virtue; the beautiful woman expresses an aspect of the divine purpose, one of God's aims, as well as a man of genius does, or a virtuous woman. She feels this, and hence her pride. She is instinctively conscious of the infinite treasure she possesses in her body; she is well aware that without intellect, without talent, without great virtue, she counts among the chief manifestations of God. And why forbid her to make the most of the gift bestowed upon her, or to give the diamond allotted to her its due setting? By adorning herself woman accomplishes a duty; she practises an art, an exquisite art, in a sense the most charming of arts. Do not let us be misled by the smile which certain words provoke in the *frivolous*. We award the palm of genius to the Greek artist who succeeded in solving the most delicate of problems, that of adorning the human body, that is to say, adorning perfection itself, and yet some people wish to see nothing more than an affair of *chiffons* in the attempt to collaborate with the finest work of God—woman's beauty! Woman's toilette with all its refinements is a great art in its own way. The epochs and countries which can succeed in this are the great epochs and great countries, and Christianity, by the embargo it laid on this kind of research, showed that the social ideal it had conceived would only become the framework of a complete society at a much later period, when the revolt of men of the world had broken the narrow yoke originally imposed on the sect by a fanatical pietism.

the most highly moral people, at the approach of death to which they are condemned, a few hours before it arrives, can do nothing more beautiful than yield to their animal passions.

So that in the circle in which Maupassant grew up and was educated, the representation of feminine beauty and sex-love was and is regarded quite seriously, as a matter long ago decided and recognized by the wisest and most learned men, as the true object of the highest art—*Le grand art.*

And it is this theory, dreadful in its folly, to which Maupassant submitted when he became a fashionable writer; and, as was to be expected, this false ideal led him in his novels into a series of mistakes, and to ever weaker and weaker production.

In this the fundamental difference between the demands of the novel and of the short story is seen. A novel has for its aim, even for external aim, the description of a whole human life or of many human lives, and therefore its writer should have a clear and firm conception of what is good and bad in life, and this Maupassant lacked; indeed according to the theory he held, that is just what should be avoided. Had he been a novelist like some talentless writers of sensual novels, he would, being without talent, have quietly described what was evil as good, and his novels would have had unity, and would have been interesting to people who shared his view. But Maupassant had talent, that is to say, he saw things in their essentials and therefore involuntarily discerned the truth. He involuntarily saw the evil in what he wished to consider good. That is why, in all his novels except the first, his sympathies continually waver, now presenting the evil as good, and now admitting that the evil is evil and the good good, but continually shifting from the one standpoint to the other. And this destroys the very basis of any artistic impression—the framework on which it is built. People of little artistic sensibility often think that a work of art possesses

unity when the same people act in it throughout, or when it is all constructed on one plot, or describes the life of one man. That is a mistake. It only appears so to a superficial observer. The cement which binds any artistic production into one whole and therefore produces the illusion of being a reflection of life, is not the unity of persons or situations, but the unity of the author's independent moral relation to his subject. In reality, when we read or look at the artistic production of a new author the fundamental question that arises in our soul is always of this kind: "Well, what sort of a man are you? Wherein are you different from all the people I know, and what can you tell me that is new, about how we must look at this life of ours?" Whatever the artist depicts—saints, robbers, kings, or lackeys—we seek and see only the artist's own soul. If he is an established writer with whom we are already familiar, the question no longer is, "What sort of a man are you?" but, "Well, what more can you tell me that is new?" or, "From what new side will you now illumine life for me?" And therefore a writer who has not a clear definite and just view of the universe, and especially a man who considers that this isn't even wanted, cannot produce a work of art. He may write much and admirably, but a work of art will not result.

So it was with Maupassant in his novels. In his first two novels, and especially in the first, *Une Vie,* there was a clear, definite, and new relation to life, and it was an artistic production; but as soon as, submitting to the fashionable theory, he decided that this relation of the author to life was quite unnecessary and began to write merely in order *faire quelque chose de beau* (to produce something beautiful), his novels ceased to be works of art. In *Une Vie* and *Bel-Ami* the author knows whom he should love and whom he should hate, and the reader agrees with him and believes in him—believes in

the people and events he describes. But in *Notre cœur* and *Yvette* the author does not know whom he should love and whom he should hate, and the reader does not know either. And not knowing this, the reader does not believe in the events described and is not interested in them. And therefore, except the two first or, strictly speaking, excepting only the first novel, all Maupassant's, as novels, are weak; and if he had left us only his novels he would have been merely a striking instance of the way in which brilliant talents may perish as a result of the false environment in which he developed and of these false theories of art that have been devised by people who neither love nor understand it. But fortunately Maupassant wrote short stories in which he did not subject himself to the false theory he had accepted, and wrote not *quelque chose de beau,* but what touched or revolted his moral feeling. And in these short stories—not in all, but in the best of them—we see how that moral feeling grew in the author.

And it is in this that the wonderful quality of every true artist lies, if only he does not do violence to himself under the influence of a false theory. His talent teaches its possessor and leads him forward along the path of moral development, compelling him to love what deserves love and to hate what deserves hate. An artist is an artist because he sees things not as he wishes to see them but as they really are. The possessor of a talent, the man, may make mistakes, but his talent if only it is allowed free play, as Maupassant gave it free play in his short stories, discloses, undrapes the object, and compels love of it if it deserves love and hatred of it if it deserves hatred. With every true artist, when under the influence of his circle he begins to represent what should not be represented, there happens what happened to Balaam, who, wishing to bless, cursed what should be cursed,

and wishing to curse, blessed what should be blessed: involuntarily he does, not what he wishes to do but what he should do. And this happened to Maupassant.

There has hardly been another writer who so sincerely thought that all the good, all the meaning of life, lies in woman—in love, and who with such strength of passion described woman and her love from all sides; and there has hardly ever been a writer who reached such clearness and exactitude in showing all the awful phases of that very thing which had seemed to him the highest and the greatest of life's blessings. The more he penetrated into the question the more it revealed itself, and the more did the coverings fall from it and only its horrible results and yet more horrible essence remain.

Read of the idiot son, of the night with a daughter (*L'ermite*), of the sailor with his sister (*Le port*), *Le champ d'oliviers, La petite Roque,* of the English girl (*Miss Harriet*), *Monsieur Parent, L'armoire* (the girl who fell asleep in the cupboard), the wedding in *Sur l'eau,* and last expression of all, *Un cas de divorce.* Just what was said by Marcus Aurelius when devising means to destroy the attractiveness of this sin in his imagination, is what Maupassant does in most vivid artistic forms, turning one's soul inside out. He wished to extol sex-love, but the better he came to know it the more he cursed it. He cursed sex-love for the misfortunes and sufferings it bears within it, and for the disillusionments and, above all, for the falsification of real love, for the fraud which is in it from which man suffers the more acutely the more trustingly he has yielded to the deception.

The powerful moral growth of the author in the course of his literary activity is recorded in indelible traits in these charming short stories and in his best book, *Sur l'eau.*

And not alone in this involuntary and therefore all the

more powerful dethronement of sex-love is the moral growth of the author seen, but also in the more and more exalted moral demands he makes upon life.

Not alone in sex-love does he see the innate contradiction between the demands of animal and rational man; he sees it in the whole organization of the world.

He sees that the world as it is, the material world, is not only not the best of worlds, but might on the contrary be quite different—this thought is strikingly expressed in *Horla*—and that it does not satisfy the demands of reason and life. He sees that there is some other world, or at least the demand for such another world, in the soul of man.

He is tormented not only by the irrationality of the material world and its ugliness, but by its unlovingness, its discord. I do not know a more heart-rending cry of horror from one who has lost his way and is conscious of his loneliness, than the expression of this idea in that most charming story, *Solitude.*

The thing that most tormented Maupassant and to which he returns many times, is the painful state of isolation, spiritual isolation, of man; the barrier standing between him and his fellows; a barrier, he says, the more painfully felt the nearer one's bodily connexion.

What is it torments him, and what would he have? What can destroy this barrier? What end this isolation? Love—not feminine love, which has become disgusting to him, but pure, spiritual, divine love. And that is what Maupassant seeks. Towards it, towards this saviour of life long since plainly disclosed to all men, he painfully strains from those fetters in which he feels himself bound.

He does not yet know how to name what he seeks. He does not wish to name it with his lips alone, lest he should profane his holy-of-holies. But his unexpressed striving, shown in his dread of loneliness, is so sincere that it infects and at-

tracts one more strongly than many and many sermons about love, uttered only by the lips.

The tragedy of Maupassant's life is that being in a most monstrous and immoral circle, he by the strength of his talent, by that extraordinary light which was in him, was escaping from the outlook on life held by that circle, and was already near to deliverance, was already breathing the air of freedom but, having exhausted his last strength in the struggle and not being able to make a last effort—perished without having attained freedom.

The tragedy of that ruin lies in what still afflicts the majority of the so-called cultured men of our time.

Men in general never have lived without an expression of the meaning of their life. Always and everywhere, highly-gifted men going in advance of others have appeared—the prophets, as they are called—who have explained to men the meaning and purport of their life; and always the ordinary, average men, who had not the strength to explain that meaning for themselves, have followed the explanation of life their prophets have disclosed to them.

That meaning was explained eighteen hundred years ago by Christianity, simply, clearly, indubitably, and joyfully, as is proved by the lives of all who acknowledge it and follow the guidance of life which results from that conception.

But then people appeared who misinterpreted that meaning so that it became meaningless, and men are placed in the dilemma either of acknowledging Christianity as interpreted by Orthodoxy, Lourdes, the Pope, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and so forth, or of going on with life according to the teachings of Renan and his kind, that is, living without any direction or understanding of life, following only their lusts as long as they are strong, and their habits when their lusts become feeble.

And people, ordinary people, choose the one or the other, sometimes both, first dissoluteness and then Orthodoxy; and thus whole generations live, shielding themselves with various theories, invented not to disclose the truth but to hide it. And ordinary, and more especially dull, people are content.

But there are others—not many, they are rare—such as Maupassant, who with their own eyes see things as they are, see their significance, see the contradictions in life concealed from others, and vividly realize to what these contradictions must inevitably lead them—and seek to solve them in advance. They seek these solutions everywhere except where they are to be found, namely in Christianity, because Christianity appears to them outlived and discarded, repelling them by its absurdity. And vainly trying to find these solutions for themselves, they come to the conviction that there are no solutions, and that it is inherent in life that one should always bear in oneself these unsolved contradictions. And having come to such a conclusion, if these people are feeble unenergetic natures, they put up with such meaningless life and are even proud of their position, accounting their ignorance a quality and a sign of culture. But if they are energetic, truthful, and gifted natures, such as Maupassant was, they do not endure this, but one way or other try to get out of this senseless life.

It is as if men thirsting in a desert sought water everywhere except near those people who, standing round a spring pollute it and offer stinking mire instead of the water that unceasingly flows beneath the mire. Maupassant was in this position; he could not believe—evidently it never even entered his head—that the truth he sought had long ago been found and was so near him; but neither could he believe that man can live in such contradiction as that in which he felt himself to be living.

Life, according to the theories in which he had been brought

up, which surrounded him and were corroborated by all the lusts of his young, and mentally and physically strong, being—life consists in pleasure, of which the chief is to be found in woman with her love, and in the reproduction of this pleasure in its reflection, in the presentation of this love, and in exciting it in others. All this might be well; but on examining these pleasures quite other things emerge, alien and hostile to this love and this beauty: woman for some reason is disfigured, becomes unpleasantly pregnant and repulsive, gives birth to children, unwanted children; then come deceptions, cruelties, moral suffering, then mere old age, and ultimately death.

Then is this beauty indeed beauty? And why is all this so? It would be all very well if one could arrest life, but life goes on. And what does that mean? "Life goes on" means that the hair falls out, turns grey, the teeth decay, and there are wrinkles and offensive breath. Even before all is finished, everything becomes dreadful, repulsive: the rouge, the powder, the sweat, the smell, and the disgustingness, are evident. Where then is that which I serve? Where is beauty? But she is all! And if she is not, there is nothing left. There is no life!

But not merely is there no life in what seemed to be life: one begins to forsake it oneself, one becomes weaker, more stupid, one decays; others before one's eyes seize those delights in which all the good of life lay. Nor is that all. Some other possibility of life begins to glimmer on one's mind; something else, some other kind of union with men, with the whole world, one which does not admit of all these deceptions, something which cannot by any means be infringed; which is true and forever beautiful. But this cannot be. It is only the tantalizing vision of an oasis when we know that it does not exist and that there is nothing but sand everywhere.

Maupassant reached that tragic moment in life when the struggle begins between the falseness of the life about him and the truth of life of which he began to be conscious. Pangs of spiritual birth had already begun in him.

And it is these pangs of this birth that are expressed in his best work, especially in the short stories printed in this edition.

Had he not been fated to die while still suffering, but to fulfil all his possibilities, he would have left us great and illuminating works; but even what he gave us in the midst of his pain is much. Let us then be thankful to this strong and truthful man for what he has given us.

PART IX

FROM A LETTER TO PETER VERIGIN, THE DOUKHOBOR LEADER

The thoughts expressed in your letter about the advantage of living intercourse over intercourse by means of dead books pleased me greatly and I share them. I write books, and therefore know all the evil they produce. I know how people who do not wish to receive the truth can avoid reading books, or understanding what goes against the grain and exposes them, and I know how they can misinterpret and pervert—as they have done with the Gospels. All this I know, but yet I consider books to be, in our time, inevitable. I say "in our time" in contradistinction to the Gospel times, when there were no printing-presses and books were not used and the means of communication were vocal. Then it was possible to do without books, for the enemies of truth had none. But now one cannot leave this powerful engine entirely for the enemies of truth to use for deception, but must also see that it is used on the side of truth.

To refuse to make use of a book or a letter to convey one's thoughts, or to get at the thoughts of others, would be like refusing to use one's strength of voice to convey to many people at once what one has to say, or the use of one's ears to understand what some one is saying in a loud voice. It would be like refusing to acknowledge the possibility of conveying thought except tête-à-tête or in a whisper. Writing and printing have but multiplied a thousand, a hundred thousand, times the number of people by whom the thoughts expressed may be heard; but the relation between him who ex-

presses and him who receives the thoughts remains as before. As in conversation the hearer may grasp and understand what is said or may let it go in at one ear and out at the other, so it is with printed matter. As the reader of a book may twist it this way or that, so also may he who hears spoken words. As in books (and we constantly see this) much may be written that is superfluous and empty, so it is with speech. A difference exists, but it is a difference that is sometimes to the advantage of vocal sometimes of printed communication. The advantage of vocal communication is that the hearer feels the spirit of the speaker, but the disadvantage is that very often empty talkers (for instance lawyers), having a gift of words, sway men not by their reasonableness but by their mastery of oratorical art, which is not so with books. Another advantage of verbal communication is that a hearer who has not understood a matter can ask questions, but there is the accompanying disadvantage that those who have failed to understand (often purposely failed) can put questions which are not to the point and thus divert the stream of thought—which is not so with books.

The disadvantages of books are: first, that paper can endure all things, and people can have any nonsense printed causing enormous labour to be wasted in paper-making and type-setting, which is not so with vocal communication, for people can refuse to listen to nonsense. Secondly, that books are multiplying enormously, so that the good ones get lost in the sea of empty and harmful ones. But then again the advantages of the press are very great, and consist chiefly in the fact that the circle of hearers is extended a hundredfold or a thousandfold as compared to the hearers of the spoken word. And this increase in the circle of readers is important, not because there are many readers, but because, among the millions of people of different nations and stations to whom a book becomes accessible, those who share similar thoughts

discover one another, and while living thousands of miles apart, not knowing one another, are yet united and live by one spirit, having the spiritual joy and encouragement of feeling that they are not alone. Such communication I now have with you and with many, many, men of other nations—men who have never seen me, but who yet are nearer to me than sons or brothers of my own blood.

The chief consideration in favour of books is, that since men reached a certain stage of development in the external conditions of life, books and printing in general have become a means of communication among men and therefore must not be neglected. So many harmful books have been written and circulated that the evil can only be met by other books. One wedge drives out another! Christ said: "What I tell you in the ear proclaim upon the housetops." Printing is just that proclamation from the housetops. The printed word is a tongue—a tongue that reaches very far; and for this reason all that is said of the tongue relates also to the printed word: "Therewith bless we the Lord; and therewith curse we men, made after the likeness of God." Therefore one cannot be too careful what one says and listens to, nor what one prints and reads. . . .

The above extract is from a letter written to Verigin while he was in exile at Obdórsk, near the mouth of the Obi in Northern Siberia. The whole letter is given in *Essays and Letters* by Tolstoy, in the "World's Classics" series. Oxford University Press.

1895.

PART X

The essay *On Art* that follows was the last attempt Tolstoy made, after many years' reflection, to express his views on art, before he wrote *What is Art?* This essay (*On Art*) did not satisfy him, but in several respects it drew very near to what he was finally to say. What he had not arrived at when he wrote it was (1) the clear-cut working definition of art which he gives in his later work, and (2) the clear perception of the importance and necessity of appraising separately the *form* of a work of art, which makes it infectious, and the *subject-matter of feeling* which connects it with the whole of life, and which benefits or harms mankind.

One feels, in *On Art,* that Tolstoy is still treading warily a path he has not fully explored; it was only later—in *What is Art?*—that he let himself go, careless of the eggs he broke and feelings he disturbed, and asserting his convictions with emphasis and exuberance.

ON ART:

What is and What is not Art; And When is Art Important and When is it Trivial?

I

In our life there are many insignificant or even harmful activities which enjoy a respect they do not deserve, or are tolerated merely because they are considered to be of importance. The copying of flowers, horses and landscapes, such clumsy learning of musical pieces as is carried on in most of our so-called educated families, and the writing of feeble stories and bad verses, hundreds of which appear in the newspapers and magazines, are obviously not artistic activities; and the painting of indecent, pornographic pictures stimulating sensuality, or the composition of songs and stories of that nature, even if they have artistic qualities, is not a good activity worthy of respect.

And therefore, taking all the productions which are considered among us to be artistic, I think it would be useful, first, to separate what really is art from what has no right to that name; and secondly, taking what really is art, to distinguish what is important and good from what is insignificant and bad.

The question of how and where to draw the line separating Art from Not-art, and the good and important in art from the insignificant and evil, is one of enormous importance to life.

A great many of the wrong-doings and mistakes in our life result from our calling things art which are not art. We accord an unmerited respect to things which not only do not deserve it, but deserve condemnation and contempt. Apart from the enormous amount of human labour spent on the preparation of articles needed for the production of art: studios, paints, canvas, marble, musical instruments, and the theatres with their scenery and appliances,—even the lives of human beings are actually perverted by the one-sided labours demanded in the preparation of those who train for the arts. Hundreds of thousands if not millions of children are forced to one-sided toil, practising the so-called arts of dancing and music. Not to speak of the children of the educated classes who pay their tribute to art in the form of tormenting lessons,—children devoted to the ballet and musical professions are simply distorted in the name of art to which they are dedicated. If it is possible to compel children of seven or eight to play an instrument, and for ten or fifteen years to continue to do so for seven or eight hours a day; if it is possible to place girls in the schools for the ballet,[1] and then to make them cut capers during the first months of their pregnancy, and if all this is done in the name of art, then it

[1] The schools for training ballet-dancers, as well as the theatres where the chief ballets were performed, were State institutions in Russia.

is certainly necessary to define, first of all, what really is art—lest under the guise of art a counterfeit should be produced; and then also to prove that art is a matter of importance for mankind.

Where then is the line dividing art, an important and necessary matter valuable to humanity, from useless occupations, commercial productions, and even from immorality? In what does the essence and importance of true art lie?

II

One theory—which its opponents call "tendentious"—says that the essence of true art lies in the importance of the subject treated of: that for art to be art, it is necessary that its content should be something important, necessary to man, good, moral, and instructive.

According to that theory the artist—that is to say the man who possesses a certain skill—by taking the most important theme which interests society at the time, can, by clothing it in what looks like artistic form, produce a work of true art. According to that theory religious, moral, social, and political truths clothed in what seems like artistic form are artistic productions.

Another theory, which calls itself "esthetic," or "art for art's sake," says that the essence of true art lies in the beauty of its form; that for art to be true, it is necessary that what it presents should be beautiful.

According to that theory it is necessary for the production of art, that an artist should possess technique, and should depict an object which produces in the highest degree a pleasant impression; and therefore a beautiful landscape, flowers, fruit, a nude figure, and ballets, will be works of art.

A third theory—which calls itself "realistic"—says that the essence of art consists in the truthful, exact presentation

of reality: that, for art to be true it is necessary that it should depict life as it really is.

According to that theory, it follows that works of art may be anything an artist sees or hears, all that he is able to make use of in his function of reproduction, independently of the importance of the subject or beauty of the form.

Such are the theories; and on the basis of each of them so-called works of art appear which fit the first, the second, or the third. But, apart from the fact that each of these theories contradicts the others, not one of them satisfies the chief demand, namely, to ascertain the boundary which divides art from commercial, insignificant, or even harmful productions.

In accordance with each of these theories, works can be produced unceasingly, as in any handicraft, and they may be insignificant or harmful.

As to the first theory ("tendency"), important subjects—religious, moral, social, or political—can always be found ready to hand, and therefore one can continually produce works of so-called art. Moreover, such subjects may be presented so obscurely and insincerely that works treating of the most important of them will prove insignificant and even harmful when the lofty content has been degraded by insincere expression.

Similarly according to the second theory ("esthetic"), any man having learned the technique of any branch of art can incessantly produce something beautiful and pleasant, but again this beautiful and pleasant thing may be insignificant and harmful.

Just in the same way according to the third theory ("realistic"), everyone who wishes to be an artist can incessantly produce objects of so-called art, because everybody is always interested in something. If the author is interested in what

is insignificant and evil, then his work will be insignificant and evil.

The chief point is that, according to each of these three theories, "works of art" can be produced incessantly, as in every handicraft, and that they actually are being so produced. So that these three dominant and discordant theories not merely fail to fix the line that separates art from not-art, but, on the contrary, they serve more than anything else to stretch the domain of art and to bring within it all that is insignificant and harmful.

III

Where then is the boundary dividing art that is needful and important and deserves respect from that which is unnecessary, unimportant, and deserves not respect but contempt—such as productions which have a plainly depraving effect? In what does true artistic activity consist?

To answer this question clearly we must first discriminate between artistic activity and another activity (usually confused with it), namely, that of handing on impressions and perceptions received from preceding generations—separating such activity as that, from the reception of new impressions—those namely which will thereafter be handed on from generation to generation.

The handing on of what was known to former generations, in the sphere of art, as in the sphere of science, is an activity of teaching and learning. But the production of something *new* is creation—the real artistic activity.

The business of handing on knowledge—teaching—has not an independent significance but depends entirely on the importance people attach to that which has been created—what it is they consider it necessary to hand on from generation to generation. And therefore the definition of what a creation

is will also define what it is that should be handed on. Moreover, the teacher's business is not usually considered to be artistic; the importance of artistic activity is properly attributed to creation—that is to artistic production.[1]

What then is artistic (and scientific) creation?

Artistic (and also scientific) creation is such mental activity as brings dimly-perceived feelings (or thoughts) to such a degree of clearness that these feelings (or thoughts) are transmitted to other people.

The process of "creation"—one common to all men and therefore known to each of us by inner experience—occurs as follows: a man surmises or dimly feels something that is perfectly new to him, which he has never heard of from anybody. This something new impresses him, and in ordinary conversation he points out to others what he perceives, and to his surprise finds that what is apparent to him is quite unseen by others. They do not see or do not feel what he tells them of. This isolation, discord, disunion from others, at first disturbs him, and verifying his own perception the man tries in different ways to communicate to others

[1] The most usual and widely diffused definition of art is that art is a particular activity not aiming at material utility, but affording pleasure to people; a pleasure, it is usually added, "ennobling and elevating to the soul."

This definition corresponds to the conception of art held by the majority of people; but it is inexact and not quite clear, and admits of very arbitrary interpretation.

It is not clear, for it fuses in one conception art as a human activity producing objects of art, and also the feelings of the recipient; and it admits of arbitrary interpretation, because it does not define wherein lies the pleasure that "ennobles and elevates the soul." So that one person may declare that he receives such pleasure from a certain production from which another does not receive it at all.

And therefore to define art it is necessary to define the peculiarity of that activity, both in its origin in the soul of the producer and in the peculiarity of its action on the souls of the recipients. This activity is distinguished from any other activity of craftsmanship, or trade, or even science (though it has great affinity with this last), in that it is not evoked by any material need, but supplies to both producer and recipient a special kind of so-called "artistic satisfaction." To explain to oneself this characteristic we must understand what impels people to this activity—that is, how artistic production originates.

what he has seen, felt, or understood; but these others still do not understand what he communicates to them, or do not understand it as he understands or feels it. And the man begins to be troubled by a doubt as to whether he imagines and dimly feels something that does not really exist, or whether others do not see and do not feel something that does exist. And to solve this doubt he directs his whole strength to the task of making his discovery so clear that there cannot be the smallest doubt, either for himself or for other people, as to the existence of that which he perceives; and as soon as this elucidation is completed and the man himself no longer doubts the existence of what he has seen, understood, or felt, others at once see, understand, and feel as he does, and it is this effort to make clear and indubitable to himself and to others what both to others and to him had been dim and obscure, that is the source from which flows the production of man's spiritual activity in general, or what we call works of art—which widen man's horizon and oblige him to see what had not been perceived before.[1]

It is in this that the activity of an artist consists; and to this activity is related the feeling of the recipient. This feeling has its source in imitativeness, or rather in a capacity to be infected, and in a certain hypnotism—that is to say in the fact that the artist's stress of spirit elucidating to himself the subject that had been doubtful to him, communicates itself, through the artistic production, to the recipients. A work of art is then finished when it has been brought to such clearness that it communicates itself to others and evokes in them the same feeling that the artist experienced while creating it.

What was formerly unperceived, unfelt, and uncompre-

[1] The division of the results of man's mental activity into scientific, philosophic, theological, hortatory, artistic, and other groups, is made for convenience of observation. But such divisions do not exist in reality; just as the divisions of the River Volga into the Tver, Nizhigorod, Simbirsk and Saratov sections, are not divisions of the river itself, but divisons we make for our own convenience.

hended, by them is by intensity of feeling brought to such a degree of clearness that it becomes acceptable to all, and the production is a work of art.

The satisfaction of the intense feeling of the artist who has achieved his aim gives pleasure to him. Participation in this same stress of feeling and in its satisfaction, a yielding to this feeling, the imitation of it and infection by it (as by a yawn), the experiencing in brief moments of what the artist has lived through while creating his work, is the enjoyment those who assimilate a work of art obtain.

Such in my opinion is the peculiarity distinguishing art from any other activity.

IV

According to this division, all that imparts to mankind something new, achieved by an artist's stress of feeling and thought, is a work of art. But that this mental activity should really have the importance people attach to it, it is necessary that it should contribute what is good to humanity, for it is evident that to a new evil, to a new temptation leading people into evil, we cannot attribute the value given to art as to something that benefits mankind. The importance, the value, of art consists in widening man's outlook, in increasing the spiritual wealth that is humanity's capital.

Therefore, though a work of art must always include something new, yet the revelation of something new will not always be a work of art. That it should be a work of art, it is necessary:

(1) That the new idea, the content of the work, should be of importance to mankind.
(2) That this content should be expressed so clearly that people may understand it.
(3) That what incites the author to work at his production should be an inner need and not an external inducement.

And therefore that will not be a work of art in which no new thing is disclosed; and that which has for its content what is insignificant and therefore unimportant to man will not be a work of art, however intelligibly it may be expressed and even if the author has worked at it sincerely from an inner impulse. Nor will that be a work of art which is so expressed as to be unintelligible however sincere may be the author's relation to it; nor that which has been produced by its author not from an inner impulse but for an external aim, however important may be its content and however intelligible its expression.

That is a work of art which discloses something new and at the same time in some degree satisfies the three conditions: content, form, and sincerity.

And here we come to the problem of how to define that lowest degree of content, beauty, and sincerity, which a production must possess to be a work of art.

To be a work of art it must, in the first place, be a thing which has for its content something hitherto unknown but of which man has need; secondly, it must show this so intelligibly that it becomes generally accessible; and thirdly, it must result from the author's need to solve an inner doubt.

A work in which all three conditions are present even to a slight degree, will be a work of art; but a production from which even one of them is absent will not be a work of art.

But it will be said that every work contains something needed by man, and every work will be to some extent intelligible, and that an author's relation to every work has some degree of sincerity. Where is the limit of needful content, intelligible expression, and sincerity of treatment? A reply to this question will be given us by a clear perception of the highest limit to which art may attain: the opposite of the highest limit will show the lowest limit, dividing all that cannot be accounted art from what is art. The highest limit

of content is such as is always necessary to all men. That which is always necessary to all men is what is good or moral.[1] The lowest limit of content, consequently, will be such as is not needed by men, and is a bad and immoral content. The highest limit of expression will be such as is always intelligible to all men. What is thus intelligible is that which has nothing in it obscure, superfluous, or indefinite, but only what is clear, concise, and definite,—what is called beautiful. Conversely, the lowest limit of expression will be such as is obscure, diffuse, and indefinite,—that is to say formless. The highest limit of the artist's relation to his subject will be such as evokes in the soul of all men an impression of reality—the reality not so much of what exists, as of what goes on in the soul of the artist. This impression of reality is produced by truth only; and therefore the highest relation of an author to his subject is *sincerity.* The lowest limit, conversely, will be that in which the author's relation to his subject is not genuine, but false. All works of art lie between these two limits.

A perfect work of art will be one in which the content is important and significant to all men, and therefore it will be *moral.* The expression will be quite clear, intelligible to all, and therefore *beautiful;* the author's relation to his work will be altogether sincere, and heartfelt, and therefore *true.* Imperfect works, but still works of art, will be such productions as satisfy all three conditions though it be but in unequal

[1] Half-a-century ago no explanation would have been needed of the words "important", "good", and "moral", but in our time nine out of ten educated people, at these words, will ask with a triumphant air: "What *is* important, good or moral?" assuming that these words express something conditional and not admitting of definition and therefore I must answer this anticipated objection.

That which unites people, not by violence but by love: that which serves to disclose the joy of the union of men with one another, is "important", "good", or "moral". "Evil" and "immoral" is that which divides them, which leads men to the suffering that is produced by disunion. "Important" is that which causes people to understand and to love what they previously did not understand or love.

degree. That only will be no work of art, in which either the content is quite insignificant and unnecessary to man, or the expression quite unintelligible, or the relation of the author to the work is quite insincere. In the degree of perfection attained in each of these respects lies the difference in quality between all true works of art. Sometimes the first predominates, sometimes the second, and sometimes the third.

All the remaining imperfect productions fall naturally, according to the three fundamental conditions of art, into three chief kinds: 1) those which stand out by the importance of their content, 2) those which stand out by their beauty of form, and 3) those which stand out by their heartfelt sincerity. These three kinds all yield approximations to perfect art and are inevitably produced wherever there is art.

Thus among young artists heartfelt sincerity chiefly prevails, coupled with insignificance of content and more or less beauty of form. Among older artists, on the contrary, the importance of the content often predominates over beauty of form and sincerity. Among laborious artists beauty of form predominates over content and sincerity.

All works of art may be appraised by the prevalence in them of the first, the second, or the third quality, and they may all be subdivided into 1) those that have content and are beautiful, but have little sincerity; 2) those that have content, but little beauty and little sincerity; 3) those that have little content, but are beautiful and sincere, and so on, in all possible combinations and permutations.

All works of art, and in general all the mental activities of man, can be appraised on the basis of these three fundamental qualities; and they have been and are so appraised.

The differences in valuation have resulted, and do result, from the extent of the demand presented to art by certain people at a certain time in regard to these three conditions.

So for instance in classical times the demand for signifi-

cance of content was much higher, and the demand for clearness and sincerity much lower than they subsequently became, especially in our time. The demand for beauty became greater in the Middle Ages, but on the other hand the demand for significance and sincerity became lower; and in our time the demand for sincerity and truthfulness has become much greater, but on the other hand the demand for beauty, and especially for significance, has been lowered.

V

The valuation of works of art is necessarily correct when all three conditions are taken into account; and inevitably incorrect when works are valued not on the basis of all three conditions but only of one or two of them.

And yet such valuation of works of art on the basis of only one of the three conditions is a particularly prevalent error in our time, lowering the general level of what is demanded from art to what can be reached by a mere imitation of it, and confusing the minds of critics, and of the public, and of artists themselves, as to what is really art and as to where its boundary lies—the line that divides it from craftsmanship and from mere amusement.

This confusion arises from the fact that people who lack the capacity to understand true art judge of works of art from one side only, and according to their own characters and training observe in them the first, the second, or the third side only, imagining and assuming that this one side perceptible to them—and the significance of art based on this one condition—defines the whole of art. Some see only the importance of the content, others only the beauty of form, and others again only the artist's sincerity and therefore truthfulness. And according to what they see, they define the nature of art itself, construct their theories, and praise and encourage

those who, like themselves, not understanding wherein a work of art consists, turn them out like pancakes and inundate our world with foul floods of all kinds of follies and abominations, which they call "works of art."

Such are the majority of people and, as representatives of that majority, such were the originators of the three esthetic theories already alluded to, which meet the perceptions and demands of that majority.

All these theories are based on a misunderstanding of the whole importance of art, and on severing its three fundamental conditions; and therefore these three false theories of art clash, as a result of the fact that real art has three fundamental conditions, of which each of those theories accepts but one.

The first theory, of so-called "tendencious" art, accepts as a work of art one that has for its subject something which, though it be not new, is important to all men by its moral content, independently of its beauty and spiritual depth.

The second ("art for art's sake") recognizes as a work of art only that which has beauty of form, independently of its novelty, the importance of its content, or its sincerity.

The third theory, the "realistic," recognizes as a work of art only that in which the author is sincerely related to his subject and which is therefore truthful. The last theory says that however insignificant or even nasty may be the content, with a more or less beautiful form, the work will be good if the author's relation to what he depicts is sincere and therefore truthful.

VI

All these theories forget one chief thing—that neither importance, nor beauty, nor sincerity, provides the requisite for works of art, but that the basic condition of the production of

such works is that the artist should be conscious of something new and important. And that, therefore, as it always has been so it always will be necessary for a true artist to be able to perceive something quite new and important. For the artist to see what is new, it is necessary that he should observe and think, and not occupy his life with trifles which hinder his attentive penetration into, and meditation on, life's phenomena. In order that the new things he sees may be important ones, the artist must be a morally enlightened man and he must not live a selfish life, but must share the common life of humanity.

If only he sees what is new and important, he will be sure to find a form which will express it, and the sincerity which is an essential content of artistic production will be present. He must be able to express the new subject so that all may understand it. For this he must have such mastery of his craft that when working he will think as little about the rules of that craft as a man when walking thinks of the laws of motion. And in order to attain this, the artist must not look round on his work and admire it, must not make technique his aim, as one who is walking should not contemplate and admire his gait, but should be concerned only to express his subject clearly and in such a way as to be intelligible to all.

Finally, to work at his subject not for external aims but to satisfy his inner need, the artist must rise superior to motives of avarice and vanity. He must love with his own heart and not with another's, and not pretend that he loves what others love or consider worthy of love.

And to attain all this the artist must do as Balaam did when the messengers came to him, and he went apart awaiting God, so as to say only what God commanded; and he must not do as that same Balaam afterwards did when, tempted by gifts, he went to the king against God's command, as was

evident even to the ass on which he rode, though not perceived by him while blinded by avarice and vanity.

VII

In our time nothing of that kind is demanded. A man who wishes to follow art need not wait for some important and new perception to arise in his soul, which he can sincerely love and having loved can clothe in suitable form. In our time a man who wishes to follow art either takes a subject current at the time and one praised by people who in his opinion are clever, and clothes it as best he can in what is called "artistic form"; or he chooses a subject which gives him most opportunity to display his technical skill, and with toil and patience produces what he considers to be a work of art; or having received some chance impression he takes what caused that impression for his subject, imagining that it will yield a work of art since it happened to produce an impression on him.

And so there appear an innumerable quantity of so-called works of art; which, as in every mechanical craft, can be produced without the least intermission. There always are current fashionable notions in society, and with patience a technique can always be learnt, and something or other will always seem interesting to someone. Having separated the conditions that should be united in a true work of art, people have produced so many works of pseudo-art that the public, the critics, and the pseudo-artists themselves, are left quite without any definition of what they themselves hold to be art.

The people of to-day have as it were said to themselves: "Works of art are good and useful; so it is necessary to produce more of them." It would indeed be a very good thing

if there were more; but the trouble is that you can only produce to order works which are no better than works of mere craftsmanship because of their lack of the essential conditions of art.

A really artistic production cannot be made to order, for a true work of art is the revelation (by laws beyond our grasp) of a new conception of life arising in the artist's soul, which, when expressed, lights up the path along which humanity progresses.

PART XI

AN INTRODUCTION TO "WHAT IS ART?"

Tolstoy's *What is Art?* both in Russian and in my translation, appeared in separate parts during the first half of 1898. I wrote the following Introduction about a year later, for an edition issued in April 1899.

An estimable and charming Russian lady I knew, felt so strongly the charm of the music and ritual of the services of the Russo-Greek Church that she wished the peasants, in whom she was interested, to retain their blind faith though she herself disbelieved the Church doctrines. "Their lives are so poor and bare, they have so little art, so little poetry and colour in their lives—let them at least enjoy what they have; it would be cruel to undeceive them," said she.

Suppose a false and antiquated view of life is supported by means of art and is inseparably linked to some manifestations of art which we enjoy and prize; if the false view of life be destroyed this art will cease to appear valuable. Is it better to screen the error for the sake of preserving the art? Or should the art be sacrificed for the sake of truth?

Again and again in history a dominant Church has utilized art to maintain its sway over men. Reformers (early Christians, Mohammedans, Puritans, and others) have perceived that art bound people to the old faith and have been angry with art. They diligently chipped the noses from statues and images, and were wroth with ceremonies, decorations, stained-glass windows, and processions. They were even ready to banish art altogether, for besides the superstitions it upheld, they saw that it depraved and perverted men by dramas, drinking-songs, novels, pictures, and dances, of a

kind that awakened man's lower nature. Yet art always re-asserted her sway and to-day we are told by many that art has nothing to do with morality—that art should be followed for art's sake.

I went one day with a woman artist to the Bodkin Art Gallery, in Moscow. In one of the rooms, on a table, lay a book of coloured pictures, issued in Paris and supplied, I believe, to private subscribers only. The pictures were admirably executed, but represented scenes in the private cabinets of a restaurant. A particular crisis of sexual indulgence was the chief subject of each picture: women extravagantly dressed and partly undressed; women exposing their legs and breasts to men in evening dress; men and women taking liberties with each other, or dancing the *can-can*, etc., etc. My companion the artist, a maiden lady of irreproachable conduct and reputation, began deliberately to look at these pictures. I could not let my attention dwell on them without ill effects. Such things had a certain attraction for me and tended to make me restless and nervous. I ventured to suggest that the subjects of the pictures were objectionable. But my companion (who prided herself on being an artist) remarked with conscious superiority that from an artist's point of view the *subject* was of no consequence. The pictures being very well executed were artistic, and therefore worthy of attention and study. Morality had nothing to do with art.

Here again is a problem. One remembers Plato's advice not to let our thoughts run upon women for if we do we shall not think clearly about anything else, and one knows that to neglect this advice is to lose tranquillity of mind; but then one does not wish to be considered narrow, ascetic, or inartistic, or to lose artistic pleasures which those around us esteem so highly.

Again, the newspapers not long ago printed proposals to construct a Wagner Opera House, to cost, if I recollect

rightly, £100,000—about as much as a hundred labourers may earn by five or ten years' hard work. The writers thought it would be a good thing if such an Opera House were erected and endowed. But I had a talk lately with a man who, till his health failed him, had worked as a builder in London. He told me that when he was younger he had been very fond of theatre-going, but later, when he thought things over and considered that in almost every number of his weekly paper he read of cases of people whose death was hastened by lack of sufficient food, he felt it was not right that so much labour should be spent on theatres.

In reply to this argument it is urged that food for the mind is as important as food for the body. As the labouring classes work to produce food and necessaries for themselves and for the cultured, so some of the cultured class work to produce plays and operas. It is a division of labour. But this again invites the rejoinder that, sure enough, the labourers produce food for themselves and also food that the cultured class accept and consume; but that the artists seem too often to produce their spiritual food for the cultured only—at any rate a singularly small share seems to reach the country labourers who work to supply the bodily food! Even were the division of labour shown to be a fair one, the division of products seems remarkably one-sided.

Once again: How is it that often when a new work is produced, neither the critics, the artists, the publishers, nor the public, seem to know whether it is valuable or worthless? Some of the most famous books in English literature could at first hardly find a publisher, or were savagely derided by leading critics; while other works once acclaimed as masterpieces are now laughed at or utterly forgotten. A play [1] which nobody now reads was once passed off as a newly-discovered masterpiece of Shakespeare's, and was produced

[1] Ireland's *Vortigern*.

at a leading London theatre. Are the critics playing blind-man's buff? Are they relying on each other? Is each following his own whim and fancy? Or do they possess a criterion never revealed to those outside the profession?

Such are a few of the many problems relating to art which present themselves to us all, and it is the purpose of Tolstoy's *What is Art?* to enable us to reach such a comprehension of art, and of the position art should occupy in our lives, as will enable us to answer these questions.

The task is one of enormous difficulty. Under the cloak of "art" so much selfish amusement and self-indulgence tries to justify itself, and so many mercenary interests are concerned in preventing the light from shining in upon the subject, that the clamour raised by this book can only be compared to that raised by the silversmiths of Ephesus when they shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" for about the space of two hours.

Elaborate theories block the path with subtle sophistries or ponderous pseudo-erudition. Merely to master these and expose them was by itself a great labour, necessary in order to clear the road for any fresh view. To have accomplished this in a couple of chapters is a remarkable achievement. To have done it without making the book intolerably dry is more wonderful still. In Chapter III (where a rapid summary of some sixty esthetic writers is given) even Tolstoy's powers fail to make the subject interesting, and he has to plead with his readers "not to be overcome by dulness, but to read these extracts through."

Among the writers mentioned, English readers miss the names of John Ruskin and William Morris, especially as much that Tolstoy says is in accord with their views.

Of Ruskin, Tolstoy has a very high opinion. I once heard him say, "I don't know why you English make such a fuss about Gladstone—you have a much greater man in Ruskin."

As a stylist, too, Tolstoy spoke of him with high commendation. Ruskin, however, though he wrote on art with profound insight and said many things with which Tolstoy fully agrees, as well as some things he dissents from, has, I think, nowhere so systematized and summarized his view that it can be readily quoted in the concise way which has enabled Tolstoy to indicate his points of essential agreement with Home (Lord Kames), Véron, and Kant.[1]

As to William Morris, we are reminded of his dictum that art is the workman's expression of joy in his work, by Tolstoy's "As soon as the author is not producing art for his own satisfaction—does not himself feel what he wishes to express—a resistance immediately springs up" (p. 267); and again, "In such transmission to others of the feelings that have arisen in him, he (the artist) will find his happiness" (p. 316).

[1] I leave this as it stood in the first edition, but after it was written I heard from Tolstoy twice on the subject. First, my friend Paul Boulanger wrote from Yásnaya Polyána (24th June 1901, O.S.), during an illness of Tolstoy's as follows:—

"You ask why Tolstoy did not mention Ruskin in *What is Art?* He asks me to reply that he did not do so: first, because Ruskin attributes a special moral importance to beauty in art; and, secondly, because all his writings, rich as they are in depth of thought, are yet not bound together by any one ruling idea."

After Tolstoy's recovery, a letter (undated) reached me on 17th August 1901, in which he wrote:—

"I have forgotten what I wrote you about Ruskin, and fear it was not correct. I have lately read an excellent book about him, *Ruskin et la Bible,* I think by Brunhes. Ruskin's chief limitation was that he could never quite free himself from the Church-Christian outlook upon life. At the time he commenced his work on social questions, when he wrote *Unto this Last,* he freed himself from the dogmatic tradition, but a cloudy Church-Christian understanding of the demands of life—which made it possible for him to unite ethical with esthetical ideals—remained with him to the end and weakened his message. It was also weakened by the artificiality, and consequent obscurity, of his poetic style. Do not imagine that I deny the work of this great man, who has quite rightly been called a prophet. I always was charmed and am charmed by him, but I point out spots which exist even on the sun. He is specially good when a wise writer, in accord with him, makes extracts from him, as is done in *Ruskin et la Bible* (which read), but to read all Ruskin consecutively, as I did, greatly weakens his effect."

Tolstoy sweeps over a far wider range of thought, but he and Morris are not opposed. Morris was emphasizing part of what Tolstoy is implying.

A difficulty not yet mentioned lurks in the hearts of most of us. We have enjoyed works of "art." We have been interested by the psychology analysed in a novel, or we have been thrilled by an unexpected "effect"; have admired the exactitude with which real life has been reproduced, or have had our feelings touched by allusions to, or imitations of, works—old German legends, Greek myths, or Hebrew poetry—which moved us long ago, as they moved generations before us. And we thought all this was "art." Not clearly understanding what art is and wherein its importance lies, we were not only attached to these things, but attributed importance to them, calling them "artistic" and "beautiful" without well knowing what we meant by those words.

But here is a book that obliges us to clear our minds. It challenges us to define "art" and "beauty," and to say what grounds we have for attaching *importance* to these things that happen to please us.

As to beauty, we find that the definition given by esthetic writers amounts merely to this, that "Beauty is a kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its object." But it follows from this, that "beauty" is a matter of taste, differing among different people; and to attach special importance to what pleases *me* (and others who have had the same sort of training that I have had) is merely to repeat the old, old mistake which so divides human society: it is like declaring that my race is the best race, my nation the best nation, my Church the best Church, and my family the best family. It indicates ignorance and selfishness.

But "truth angers those whom it does not convince"; there

are people who do not wish to understand these things. It seems, at first, as though Tolstoy were obliging us to sacrifice something valuable. We do not realize that we are being helped to select the best art, but we do feel that we are being deprived of our sense of satisfaction in Baudelaire.

Both the magnitude and the difficulty of the task were therefore very great, but they have been surmounted in a marvellous manner. In its construction, in co-ordination, in concise presentation of many converging thoughts, this is, probably, the most masterly of all Tolstoy's works.

He was indeed peculiarly qualified for the task he has accomplished. It was after many years of work as a writer of fiction, and when he was already standing in the very foremost rank of European novelists,[1] that he found himself compelled to face, in deadly earnest, the deepest problems of human life. He not only could not go on writing books, but he felt he could not live, unless he found clear guidance, so that he might walk with a sure foot and know the purpose and meaning of his life. Not as a mere question of speculative curiosity but as a matter of vital necessity, he devoted years to re-discover the truths which underlie all religion.

To fit him for this task he possessed great knowledge of men and books, a wide experience of life, a knowledge of languages, and freedom from bondage to any authority but that of reason and conscience. He was pinned to no Nicene Creed, nor was he in receipt of any retaining fee he was not prepared to sacrifice. Another rare gift was his wonderful sincerity, and (due, I think, to that sincerity) an amazing power of looking at the phenomena of our complex and artificial life with the eyes of a child; going straight to the real, obvious facts of the case and brushing aside the sophistries,

[1] *Boyhood, Childhood and Youth* were published in 1851–7. *Sevastopol* 1855–6. *Family Happiness* 1859. *The Cossacks* and *Polikushka* in 1863. *War and Peace* 1864–9, and *Anna Karénina* 1875–7.

conventionalities, and "authorities" by which they are obscured.

He commenced the task when he was about fifty years of age, and during the following twenty years produced a dozen philosophical works of first-rate importance, besides many stories and short articles.

And all this time the problems of Art—What is Art? What importance should we attach to it? How is it related to the rest of life?—were working in his mind. He was a great artist, often upbraided for having abandoned his art. He, of all men, was bound to clear his thoughts on this perplexing subject and to express them. His whole philosophy of life—the "religious perception" to which, with such tremendous labour and effort, he had attained—forbade him to detach art from life, and place it in a water-tight compartment where it should not act on life or be re-acted upon by life.

Life to him is rational. It has a clear aim and purpose, discernible by the aid of reason and conscience. And no human activity can be fully understood or rightly appreciated until the central purpose of life is perceived.

You cannot piece together a puzzle-map as long as you keep one bit in a wrong place, but when the pieces all fit together you have a demonstration that they are all in their right places. Tolstoy used that simile years ago when explaining how the comprehension of the text, "resist not him that is evil," enabled him to perceive the coherence of Christ's teaching, which had long baffled him. So it is with the problem of Art. Wrongly understood, it tends to confuse and perplex one's whole comprehension of life. But the clue supplied by true "religious perception" enables us to place art so that it fits in with a right understanding of politics, economics, sex-relationships, science, and all other phases of human activity.

The basis on which the work rests is a perception of the meaning of human life. This was lost sight of by some reviewers, who when the book first appeared misrepresented what Tolstoy said and then demonstrated how stupid he would have been had he said what they attributed to him. Leaving his premises and arguments untouched, they dissented from various conclusions—as though it were all a question of taste. But such criticism can lead to nothing. Discussions as to why one man likes pears and another prefers meat do not help towards finding a definition of what is essential in nourishment; and, just so, "the solution of questions of taste in art does not help to make clear what this particular human activity which we call art really consists in."

The object of the following summary of a few main points is to help the reader to avoid pitfalls into which many reviewers fell. It aims at being no more than a bare statement of the positions—for more than that the reader must turn to the book itself.

Let it be granted at the outset that Tolstoy writes for those who have ears to hear. He seldom pauses to safeguard himself against the captious critic, and cares little for minute verbal accuracy. For instance, on page 266, he mentions "Paris," where an English writer (even one who knew to what an extent Paris is the art centre of France, and how many artists flock thither from Russia, America, and all ends of the earth) would have been almost sure to say "France," for fear of being thought to exaggerate. One needs some alertness of mind to follow Tolstoy in his task of compressing so large a subject into so small a space. Moreover, he is an emphatic writer, who says what he means and even sometimes overemphasises it. With this much warning let us proceed to a brief summary of Tolstoy's view of art.

"Art is a human activity," and consequently does not exist for its own sake, but is valuable or objectionable in propor-

tion as it is serviceable or harmful to mankind. The object of this activity is to transmit to others feelings the artist has experienced. Such feelings—intentionally re-evoked and successfully transmitted to others—are the subject-matter of all art. By certain external signs—movements, lines, colours, sounds, or arrangements of words—an artist infects other people so that they share his feelings. Thus "art is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same emotions."

In Chapters II to V of *What is Art?* we have an examination of various theories which have taken art to be something other than this, and step by step we are brought to the conclusion that art is precisely what this definition indicates.

Having got our definition of art, we first consider art independently of its subject-matter, that is without asking whether the feelings transmitted are good, bad, or indifferent. Without adequate expression there is no art, for there is no "infection," no transference to others of the author's feeling. The test of art is infection. If an author has moved you so that you feel as he felt, if you are so united to him in feeling that it seems to you that he has expressed just what you have long wished to express, the work that has so infected you is a work of art.

In this sense it is true that art has nothing to do with morality; for the test lies in the infection and not in any consideration of the goodness or badness of the emotions conveyed. Thus the test of art is an *internal* one. The activity of art is based on the fact that a man, receiving through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feeling, is capable of experiencing the emotion that moved the man who expressed it. We all share the same common human nature, and in this sense at least are sons of one Father. To take the simplest example: a man laughs, and another, who hears, becomes merry; or a man weeps, and another,

who hears, feels sorrow. But note in passing that it does not amount to art "if a man infects others directly, immediately, at the very time he experiences the feeling: if he causes another man to yawn when he himself cannot help yawning, and so forth." Art begins when someone, *with the object of making others share his feeling,* expresses that feeling by certain external indications.

This faculty of being infected by the expression of another man's emotions is possessed by all normal human beings. For a plain man of unperverted taste, living in contact with nature, with animals, and with his fellow-men, say, for "a country peasant of unperverted taste, this is as easy as it is for an animal of unspoilt scent to follow the trace he needs." And he will know indubitably whether a work presented to him does, or does not, unite him in feeling with the author. But very many people "of our circle" (upper and middle-class society) live such unnatural lives, in such conventional relations to the people around them, and in such artificial surroundings, that they have lost "that simple feeling . . . that sense of infection with another's feeling—compelling us to joy in another's gladness, to sorrow in another's grief, and to mingle souls with another—which is the essence of art." Such people, therefore, have no *inner* test by which to recognize a work of art; and they will always be mistaking other things for art, and seeking for external guides, such as the opinions of "recognized authorities." Or they will mistake for art something that produces a merely physiological effect: lulling or exciting them; or some intellectual puzzle that gives them something to think about.

But if most people of the "cultured crowd" are impervious to true art, is it really possible that a common country peasant, for instance, whose working-days are filled with labour, and whose brief leisure is largely taken up by his family life and by his participation in the affairs of his village—is it pos-

sible that *he* can recognize and be touched by works of art? Certainly it is! Just as in ancient Greece crowds assembled to hear the poems of Homer, so to-day in many countries, as has been the case in many ages, the Gospel parables, and much else of the highest art, are gladly heard by the common people. And this does not refer to any religious use of the Bible, but to its use as literature.

Not only do normal labouring country people possess the capacity to be infected by good art—"the epic of Genesis, folk-legends, fairy-tales, folk-songs, etc.,"—but they themselves produce songs, stories, dances, decorations, and so forth, which are works of true art. Take as examples the works of Burns or Bunyan, and the peasant women's song mentioned in Chapter XIV of *What is Art?;* or some of those melodies produced by the negro slaves on the southern plantations, which have touched, and still touch, many of us with the emotions felt by their unknown and unpaid composers.

The one great quality which makes a work of art truly contagious is its *sincerity.* If an artist is really actuated by a feeling, and is strongly impelled to communicate that feeling to other people—not for money or fame or anything else, but because he feels he must impart it—then he will not be satisfied till he has found a *clear* way of expressing it. And the man who is not borrowing his feelings, but has drawn what he expresses from the depths of his nature, is sure to be *original,* for in the same way that no two people have exactly similar faces or forms, no two people have exactly similar minds or souls.

That, in brief outline, is what Tolstoy says about art considered apart from its subject-matter. And this is how certain critics have met it. They say that when Tolstoy says the test of art is internal, he must mean that it is external. When he says that country peasants have in the past appre-

ciated, and do still appreciate, great works of art, he means that the way to detect a work of art is to see what is apparently most popular among the masses. Go into the streets or music-halls of the cities in any particular country and year, and observe what is most frequently sung, shouted, or played on the barrel-organs. It may happen to be

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay,"

or,

"We don't want to fight,
But, by Jingo, if we do!"

But whatever it is, you may at once declare these songs to be the highest musical art, without pausing to ask to what they owe their vogue: what actress, or singer, or politician, or wave of patriotic passion has conduced to their popularity! Nor need you consider whether that popularity is merely temporary and local. Tolstoy has said that works of the highest art are understood by unperverted country peasants, and here are things which are popular with a town mob—*ergo,* these things must be the highest art. The critics then proceed to say that such a test is utterly absurd. And on this point we may agree with the critics.

Some of these writers commence their articles by saying that Tolstoy is a most profound thinker, a great prophet, an intellectual force, etc. Yet when Tolstoy, in his emphatic way, makes the sweeping remark that "good art always pleases everyone," the critics do not read on to find out what he means, but reply: "No! good art does not please everyone; some people are colour-blind, and some are deaf, or have no ear for music."

It is as though a man strenuously arguing a point were to say, "Everyone knows that two and two make four," and a boy who did not at all see what the speaker was driving

at were to reply: "No, our new-born baby doesn't know it!" It would be true enough, and would distract attention from the subject in hand, but it would not elucidate matters.

There is, of course, a verbal contradiction between the statements that "good art always pleases everyone" (p. 224), and the remark concerning "people of our circle," artists and public and critics who, "with very few exceptions . . . cannot distinguish true works of art from counterfeits, but continually mistake for real art the worst and most artificial" (p. 273). But I venture to think that no unprejudiced and intelligent person, reading the book carefully, should fail to reach the author's meaning.

A point to be well noted is the distinction between science and art. "Science investigates and brings to human perception such truths and such knowledge as the people of a given time and society consider most important. Art transmits these truths from the region of perception to the region of emotion." Science is an "activity of the understanding which demands preparation and a certain sequence of knowledge, so that one cannot learn trigonometry before knowing geometry." "This business of art", on the other hand, "lies just in this: to make that understood and felt which in the form of an argument might be incomprehensible and inaccessible" (p. 225). It "infects any man, whatever his plane of development," and "(as is said in the Gospel) the hindrance to understanding the best and highest *feelings* does not at all lie in deficiency of development or learning, but, on the contrary, in false development and false learning" (p. 226). Science and art are frequently blended in one work, *e. g.*, in the Gospel elucidation of Christ's comprehension of life, or, to take a modern instance, in Henry George's elucidation of the land question in *Social Problems*.

The class distinction to which Tolstoy repeatedly alludes needs some explanation. The position of the lower classes

in England and in Russia is different. In Russia a much larger number of people live on the verge of starvation, the condition of the factory-hands is much worse than in England, and there are many glaring cases of brutal cruelty inflicted on the peasants by the officials, the police, or the military; but in Russia a far greater proportion of the population live in the country, and a peasant usually has his own house and tills his share of the communal lands. Though Tolstoy puts forward no claim that the Russian peasants are more susceptible to art than men of other nationalities, yet he had them before his eyes and in speaking of an "unperverted country peasant" he was no doubt thinking of a man who perhaps suffered grievous want when there was a bad harvest in his province but who was accustomed to the experiences of a natural life, to the management of his own affairs, and to a real voice in all the arrangements of the village commune. The Government interfered from time to time to collect its taxes by force, to take the young men for soldiers, or to maintain the "rights" of the upper classes; but otherwise the peasant was free to do what he saw to be necessary and reasonable. On the other hand, English labourers are, for the most part, not so poor, they have more legal rights and they have votes; but a far larger number of them live in towns and are engaged in unnatural occupations, while even those that do live in touch with nature are usually mere wage-earners tilling other men's land, and living often in abject submission to the farmer, the parson, or the lady-bountiful. They are dependent on an employer for daily bread, and the condition of a wage-labourer is as unnatural as that of a landlord.

The tyranny of the Petersburg bureaucracy was more dramatic but less omnipresent, and probably far less fatal to the capacity to enjoy art, than the tyranny of our respectable, self-satisfied, and property-loving middle-class. I am, there-

fore, afraid that we have no great number of "unperverted" country labourers to compare with those of whom Tolstoy spoke, some of whom I have known personally. But the truth Tolstoy elucidates lies too deep in human nature to be infringed by such differences of local circumstance. Whatever those circumstances may be, the fact remains that in proportion as a man approaches towards the condition not only of "earning his subsistence by some kind of labour," but of "living on all its sides the life natural and proper to mankind," his capacity to appreciate true art tends to increase. On the other hand, when a class settles down into an artificial way of life—loses touch with nature, becomes confused in its perceptions of what is good and what is bad, and prefers the condition of a parasite to that of a producer—its capacity to appreciate true art must diminish. Losing all clear perception of the meaning of life, such people are necessarily left without any criterion which will enable them to distinguish good from bad art, and they are sure to follow eagerly after beauty, that is to say after "that which pleases them."

The artists of our society can usually only reach people of the upper and middle classes. But is the great artist he who delights a select audience of his own day and class, or he whose works link generation to generation and race to race in a common bond of feeling? Surely art should fulfil its purpose as completely as possible. A work of art that united every one with the author and with one another would be perfect art. Tolstoy, in his emphatic way, speaks of works of "universal" art, and (though the profound critics hasten to inform us that no work of art ever reached everybody) certainly the more nearly a work of art approaches to such expression of feeling that every one may be infected by it, the nearer (apart from all question of subject-matter) it approaches perfection.

But now as to subject-matter. The subject-matter of art consists of feelings which can be spread from man to man, feelings which are "contagious" or "infectious." Is it of no importance *what* feelings increase and multiply among men?

One man feels that submission to the authority of *his* Church, and belief in all that it teaches him, is good; another is imbued by a sense of each man's duty to think with his own head: to use for his guidance in life the reason and conscience given him. One man feels that his nation *ought* to wipe out in blood the shame of a defeat inflicted on her; another feels that we are brothers, sons of one spirit, and that the slaughter of man by man is always wrong. One man feels that the most desirable thing in life is the satisfaction obtainable by the love of women; another man feels that sex-love is an entanglement and a snare, hindering his real work in life. And each of these, if he possess an artist's gift of expression and if the feeling be really his own and sincere, may infect other men. But some of these feelings will benefit and some will harm mankind, and the more widely they are spread the greater will be their effect.

Art unites men. Surely it is desirable that the feelings in which it unites them should be "the best and highest to which men have risen," or at least should not run contrary to our perception of what makes for the well-being of ourselves and of others. And our perception of what makes for the well-being of ourselves and of others is what Tolstoy calls our "religious perception."

Therefore the subject-matter of what we in our day can esteem as being the best art, can be of two kinds only:—

1) Feelings flowing from the highest perception now attainable by man of our right relation to our neighbour and to the Source from which we come. Of such art, Dickens's *Christmas Carol,* uniting us in a more vivid sense of compassion and love, is a ready example.

2) The simple feelings of common life, accessible to every one, provided that they are such as do not hinder progress towards well-being. Art of this kind makes us realize to how great an extent we already are members one of another, sharing the feelings of one common human nature.

The success of a very primitive novel, the story of Joseph, which made its way into the sacred books of the Jews, spread from land to land and from age to age, and continues to be read to-day among people quite free from bibliolatry—shows how nearly "universal" may be the appeal of this kind of art. This branch includes all harmless jokes, folk-stories, nursery rhymes, and even dolls, if only the author or designer has expressed a feeling (tenderness, pleasure, humour, or what not) so as to infect others.

But how are we to know what *are* the "best" feelings? What is good? and what is evil? This is decided by religious perception. Some such perception exists in every human being; there is always something he approves of, and something he disapproves of. Reason and conscience are always present, active or latent, as long as man lives. Lady Lugard tells us that the most degraded cannibal she ever met drew the line at eating his own mother: nothing would induce him to entertain the idea, his moral sense was revolted by the suggestion. In more advanced societies the religious perception they have reached—the foremost stage which has been discerned in mankind's long march towards perfection—has been clearly expressed by someone, and more or less consciously accepted as an ideal by the many. But there are transition periods in history when the worn-out formularies of a past age have ceased to satisfy men, or have become so incrusted with superstitions that their original brightness is lost. The religious perception that is dawning may not yet have found such expression as to be generally understood, but for all that it exists, and shows itself by compelling

men to repudiate beliefs that satisfied their forefathers, the outward and visible signs of which are still endowed and dominant long after their spirit has taken refuge in temples not made with hands.

At such times it is difficult for men to understand each other, for the very words needed to express the deepest experiences of men's consciousness mean different things to different men. So, among us to-day, to many minds "faith" means "credulity," and "God" suggests a person of the male sex, father of one only-begotten son, and creator of the universe.

This is why Tolstoy's rational religious perception, expressed in the books he wrote during the last thirty years of his life, is frequently spoken of by people who have not grasped it, as "mysticism." [1]

The narrow materialist is shocked to find that Tolstoy will not confine himself to the "objective" view of life. Encountering in himself that "inward voice" which compels us all to choose between good and evil, Tolstoy refuses to be diverted from a matter of immediate and vital importance to him by discussions as to the derivation of the external manifestations of conscience which biologists are able to detect in remote forms of life. The mystic, on the other hand, shrinks from Tolstoy's desire to try all things by the light of reason, to depend on nothing vague, and to accept nothing on authority. The man who does not trust his own reason, fears that life thus squarely faced will prove less worth having than it is when clothed in mist.

In this work, however, Tolstoy does not recapitulate at length what he has said before. He does not pause to re-

[1] As the term "mystic" is used in more than one sense in English, I must explain that I use it to denote one who believes in a wisdom "sacredly obscure or secret" (*Chambers's Dictionary*), or "not discriminated or tested by the reason" (*Century Dictionary*). This is the sense in which it would generally be used in Russian, and in which Tolstoy uses the word.

explain why he condemns patriotism, that is, each man's preference for the predominance of *his own* country, which leads to the slaughter of man by man in war; or Churches, which are sectarian, that is, which (striving to assert that *your* doxy is heterodoxy, but *our* doxy is orthodoxy) make external authorities (Popes, Bibles, Councils) supreme, and cling to superstitions (*their own* miracles, legends, and myths), thus separating themselves from communion with the rest of mankind. He merely summarizes it all in a few sentences, defining the "religious perception" of to-day, which alone can decide for us "the degree of importance both of the feelings transmitted by art and of the information transmitted by science."

"The religious perception of our time, in its widest and most practical application, is the consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among men—in their loving harmony with one another" (p. 281).

And again:—

"However differently in form people belonging to our Christian world may define the destiny of man: whether they see it in human progress in whatever sense of the words, in the union of all men in a socialist realm, or in the establishment of a commune; whether they look forward to the union of mankind under the guidance of one universal Church, or to a federation of the world—however various in form their definitions of the destination of human life may be, all men in our times already admit that the highest well-being attainable by men is to be reached by their union with one another" (p. 309).

This is the foundation on which the whole work is based. It follows necessarily from this perception that we should consider as most important in science "investigations into the

results of good and bad actions, considerations of the reasonableness or unreasonableness of human institutions and beliefs, considerations of how human life should be lived in order to obtain the greatest well-being for each; as to what one may and should, and what one cannot and should not believe; how to subdue one's passions, and how to acquire the habit of virtue." This is the science that occupied the greatest sages of the ancient world, and it is precisely to this kind of scientific investigation that Tolstoy devoted most of the last thirty years of his life, and for the sake of which the author of *Resurrection* was often said to have "abandoned art."

Since science, like art, is "a human activity," that science best deserves our esteem, best deserves to be "chosen, tolerated, approved, and diffused," which treats of what is supremely important to man; which deals with urgent, vital, inevitable problems of actual life. Such science as this brings "to the consciousness of men the truths that flow from the religious perception of our times," and "indicates the various methods of applying this consciousness to life." "Art should transform this perception into feeling."

Experimental science studies questions of pure curiosity, or things harmful to mankind (such as quick-firing cannon), or technical improvements which in a better state of society would lighten the workers' burden. But, even at its best, such science "cannot serve as a basis for art," for it is occupied with subjects unrelated to human conduct.

Naturally enough, the last chapter of the book deals with the relation between science and art. And the conclusion is, that:

"The destiny of art in our time is to transmit from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling, the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set up, in place of the existing reign of force, that kingdom of God—

that is, of love—which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life" (p. 333).

And this art of the future will, in subject-matter, not be poorer, but far richer, than the art of to-day. From the lullaby—that will delight millions of people, generation after generation—to the highest religious art, dealing with strong, rich, and varied emotions flowing from a fresh outlook upon life and all its problems, the field open for good art is enormous. With so much to say that is urgently important to all, the art of the future will, in matter of form, also, be far superior to our art in "clearness, beauty, simplicity, and compression" (p. 315).

For beauty (which is "that which pleases")—though it depends on taste, and can furnish no *criterion* for art—will be a natural characteristic of work done, not for hire nor even for fame, but because men, living a natural and healthy life, wish to share the "highest spiritual strength which passes through them" with the greatest possible number of others. The feelings such an artist wishes to share he will transmit in a way that will please him and will therefore please other men who share his nature.

In the subject-matter of art that really lives, morality is as unavoidable as in life itself. It is in the nature of things and we cannot escape it.

In a society where each man sets himself to obtain wealth, the difficulty of obtaining an honest living tends to become greater and greater. The more keenly a society pants to obtain "that which pleases," and puts this forward as the first and great consideration, the more puerile and worthless will its art become. But in a society which seeks primarily for right relations between its members, an abundance will be obtainable for all; and when "religious perception" guides a people's art beauty inevitably results, as has always been

the case when men have seized a fresh perception of life and of its purpose.

Tried by such tests the enormous majority of the things we have been taught to consider great works of art are found wanting. Either they fail to infect (and attract merely by being interesting, realistic, dramatic, or by borrowing from others) and are therefore not works of art at all; or they are works of "exclusive art," poor in form and capable of infecting only a select audience trained and habituated to such inferior art; or they are bad in subject-matter, transmitting feelings harmful to mankind.

But strive as we may to be clear and explicit, our approval and disapproval is a matter of *degree*. The thought which underlay the remark: "Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, even God," applies, not to man only but to all things human.

Tolstoy does not shrink from condemning his own artistic productions; with the exception of two short stories,[1] he tells us, they are works of bad art. Take, for instance, the novel *Resurrection*, of which he has somewhere spoken disparagingly, as being "written in my former style." What does this mean? The book is a masterpiece in its own line; it undoubtedly infects many people, and the feelings transmitted are in the main such as Tolstoy approves of: in fact, they are the feelings to which his religious perception has brought him. If for a moment lust is shown, the reaction follows as inevitably as in real life and is transmitted with great artistic power. Tolstoy approved of treating all the problems of life, including the sex-question, quite plainly and explicitly. To guide us in life we need, not ignorance nor evasion of facts, but soundness of religious perception, clear-

[1] Both of which were written in the interval between *War and Peace* and *Anna Karénina* (1869–1872) and are included in the volume of *Twenty-three Tales*.

ness of thought, and a right direction and development of feeling. In subject-matter then *Resurrection* is as clearly a work of religious art as any novel mentioned by Tolstoy in *What is Art?* And with regard to the manner in which the matter is presented, I think it may safely be said that in "clearness," as well as in "simplicity and compression," it stands easily first among Tolstoy's novels. Of its "individuality and sincerity," to say that it equals his former works is to say that it is unsurpassed in those qualities by any novel we possess. Why the work did not satisfy Tolstoy is, I think, because it is a work of "exclusive art," laden with details of time and place. "Simplicity and compression" it possesses, but not in the degree required in works of "universal" art. It is a novel appealing mainly to the class that has leisure for novel-reading because it neglects to produce its own food, make its own clothes, or build its own houses. But if these considerations apply to *Resurrection,* they apply with at least equal force to all the best novels extant. If Tolstoy is sometimes severe on others, it must be admitted that he is at least as severe on himself, and to enable us to discern the *comparative* merits of different works of art we may use his principles without applying them as exactingly as he does himself.

There is one defect in Tolstoy's writings in general which needs to be noted. It is observable in his novels, but it is more serious in his essays and in his philosophical works. He does not write in a style always easy to read. He expects more strenuous co-operation from his readers than can safely be looked for from the ordinary man. His sentences are often long, sometimes extremely involved, and occasionally even faulty in structure. The strenuous labour he puts into his work all goes to elucidate his perception of the matter, and the sequence of the ideas. For the mere phraseology he trusted to his great power of expression, and he had as little inclination to polish it on a final revision as when writing the first

rough draft. He would re-shape an article again and again if the thoughts expressed did not satisfy him. But he would sometimes leave uncorrected a careless sentence which might baffle many an unwary reader. This characteristic was not noticeable in his earlier works, when the matter he wrote about was less absorbingly important.[1] He certainly in his later years cared nothing at all for the elegant phraseology so highly prized by writers who having nothing particular to express attach supreme importance to their power of expression. But his readers have occasionally to pay for his indifference.

What is Art? itself is a philosophical work, though many passages, and even some whole chapters, appeal to us as works of art, and we feel the contagion of the author's hope, his anxiety to serve the cause of truth and love, his indignation (sometimes rather sharply expressed) at whatever blocks the path of progress, and his contempt for much that the "cultured crowd" in our erudite, perverted society have persuaded themselves, and would fain persuade others, is the highest art.

One result which follows inevitably from Tolstoy's view (and which illustrates how widely his views differ from the fashionable esthetic mysticism), is that art is not stationary but progressive. It is true that our highest religious perception found expression eighteen hundred years ago, and then served as the basis of a literary art which is still unmatched, and that similar cases can be instanced from the farther East. But allowing for such great exceptions—to which, not inaptly, the term "inspiration" has been specially applied—the subject-matter of art improves, though long periods of time may have to be viewed to make this obvious. Our

[1] Indeed, in the earlier period of his literary activity he devoted much attention to style, and spent great pains upon it. About the period at which he wrote *Three Deaths* (1859), it is said, the style of his great artistic contemporary, Turgénev, exercised much influence on his own.

power of verbal expression may be no better now than it was in the days of David, but we must no longer esteem as good in *subject-matter* poems which appeal to the Eternal to destroy a man's private or national foes; for we have reached a religious perception which bids us have no foes, and the ultimate source (undefinable by us) from which this consciousness has come, is what we mean when we speak of God.

PART XII

WHAT IS ART?

Tolstoy's Preface to the First English Edition, translated by Aylmer Maude from the Original Mss.

THIS book of mine, "What is Art?" appears now for the first time in its true form. More than one edition has already been issued in Russia, but in each case it has been so mutilated by the Censor that I request all who are interested in my views on art only to judge of them by the work in its present shape. The causes which led to the publication of the book—with my name attached to it—in a mutilated form, were the following: In accordance with a decision I arrived at long ago,—not to submit my writings to the Censorship (which I consider to be an immoral and irrational institution), but to print them only in the shape in which they were written,—I intended not to attempt to print this work in Russia. However, my good acquaintance Professor Grote, editor of a Moscow psychological magazine, having heard of the contents of my work asked me to print it in his magazine, and promised me that he would get the book through the Censor's office unmutilated if I would but agree to a few very unimportant alterations, merely toning down certain expressions. I was weak enough to agree to this, and it has resulted in a book appearing under my name, from which not only have some essential thoughts been excluded, but into which the thoughts of other men—even thoughts utterly opposed to my own convictions—have been introduced.

The thing occurred in this way. First Grote softened my

expressions and in some cases weakened them. For instance, he replaced the words: *always* by *sometimes, all* by *some, Church* religion by *Roman Catholic* religion, *"Mother of God"* by *Madonna, patriotism* by *pseudo-patriotism, palaces* by *palatii*,[1] etc., and I did not consider it necessary to protest. But when the book was already in type, the Censor required that whole sentences should be altered, and that instead of what I said about the evil of landed property, a remark should be substituted on the evils of a landless proletariat.[1] I agreed to this also and to some further alterations. It seemed not worth while to upset the whole affair for the sake of one sentence, and when one alteration had been agreed to it seemed not worth while to protest against a second and a third. Thus little by little expressions crept into the book which altered the sense and attributed things to me that I could not have wished to say. So that by the time the book was printed it had been deprived of some part of its integrity and sincerity. But there was consolation in the thought that the book, even in this form, if it contains something good, would be of use to Russian readers whom it would otherwise not have reached. Things however turned out otherwise. *Nous comptions sans notre hôte.* After the legal term of four days had already elapsed, the book was seized and, on instructions received from Petersburg, it was handed over to the Spiritual Censor. Then Grote declined all further par-

[1] Tolstoy's remarks on Church religion were re-worded so as to seem to relate only to the Western Church, and his disapproval of luxurious life was made to apply not, say, to Queen Victoria or Nicholas II, but to the Cæsars or the Pharaohs.

[2] The Russian peasant was usually a member of a village commune, and had therefore a right to share in the land belonging to the village. Tolstoy disapproved of the order of society which allows less land for the support of a whole village full of people than was sometimes owned by a single landed proprietor. The Censor did not allow disapproval of this state of things to be expressed, but was prepared to admit that the laws and customs, say, of England—where a yet more extreme form of landed property existed and the men who actually labour on the land usually possessed none of it—deserved criticism.—A. M.

ticipation in the affair, and the Spiritual Censor proceeded to do what he liked with the book. The Spiritual Censorship is one of the most ignorant, venal, stupid, and despotic institutions in Russia. Books which disagree in any way with the recognised State religion of Russia, if once it gets hold of them, are almost always totally suppressed and burnt; which is what happened to all my religious works when attempts were made to print them in Russia. Probably a similar fate would have overtaken this work also, had not the editors of the magazine employed all means to save it. The result of their efforts was that the Spiritual Censor, a priest who probably understands art and is interested in art as much as I understand or am interested in church services, but who gets a good salary for destroying whatever is likely to displease his superiors, struck out all that seemed to him to endanger his position, and substituted his thoughts for mine wherever he considered it necessary to do so. For instance, where I speak of Christ going to the Cross for the sake of the truth he professed, the Censor substituted a statement that Christ died for mankind, that is, he attributed to me an assertion of the dogma of the Redemption, which I consider to be one of the most untruthful and harmful of Church dogmas. After correcting the book in this way, the Spiritual Censor allowed it to be printed.

To protest in Russia is impossible; no newspaper would publish such a protest, and to withdraw my book from the magazine and place the editor in an awkward position with the public was also impossible.

So the matter has remained. A book has appeared under my name containing thoughts attributed to me which are not mine.

I was persuaded to give my article to a Russian magazine in order that my thoughts, which may be useful, should become the possession of Russian readers; and the result has

been that my name is affixed to a work from which it might be assumed that I quite arbitrarily assert things contrary to the general opinion, without adducing my reasons; that I only consider false patriotism bad, but patriotism in general a very good feeling; that I merely deny the absurdities of the Roman Catholic Church and disbelieve in the Madonna, but that I believe in the Orthodox Eastern faith and in the "Mother of God"; tnat I consider all the writings collected in the Bible to be holy books, and see the chief importance of Christ's life in the Redemption of mankind by his death.

I have narrated all this in such detail because it strikingly illustrates the indubitable truth, that all compromise with institutions of which your conscience disapproves,—compromises which are usually made for the sake of the general good,—instead of producing the good you expect, inevitably lead you not only to acknowledge the institution you disapprove of, but also to participate in the evil that institution produces.

I am glad to be able by this statement at least to do something to correct the error into which I was led by my compromise.

I have also to mention that besides reinstating the parts excluded by the Censor from the Russian editions, other corrections and additions of importance have been made in this edition.

LEO TOLSTOY.

29th March 1898.

NOTE:

When a subscription edition of Tolstoy's works edited by Professor Leo Wiener, was published in 1904, by Dana Estes in U. S. A. and G. M. Dent & Co. in London, this request of Tolstoy's to "all who are interested in my views on art only to judge of them by the work in its present shape," was disregarded, another version was substituted, and incidentally this preface was omitted from that "complete edition" of his works.

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WHAT IS ART?

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(This Table of Contents is compiled by the translator.)

CHAPTER I

Time and labour spent on art. Lives stunted in its service. Morality sacrificed to, and anger justified by, art. The rehearsal of the opera described.

TAKE up any one of our ordinary newspapers and you will find a part devoted to the theatre and music. In almost every number you will find a description of some art-exhibition or of some particular picture, and you will always find reviews of new works of art that have appeared: of volumes of poems, of short stories, or of novels.

Promptly and in detail as soon as it has occurred, an account is published of how such and such an actress or actor played this or that rôle in such and such a drama, comedy, or opera, and of the merits of the performance; as well as of the contents of the new drama, comedy, or opera, with its defects and merits. With as much care and detail or even more, we are told how such and such an artist has sung a certain piece, or has played it on the piano or violin, and what were the merits and defects of the piece and of the performance. In every large town there is sure to be at least one, if not more than one, exhibition of new pictures, the merits and defects of which are discussed in the utmost detail by critics and connoisseurs.

New novels and poems, in separate volumes or in the magazines, appear almost every day, and the newspapers consider it their duty to give their readers detailed accounts of these artistic productions.

For the support of art in Russia (where for the education of the people only a hundredth part is spent of what would be required to give everyone an opportunity of instruction)

the Government grants millions of roubles in subsidies to academies, conservatoires, and theatres. In France twenty million francs are assigned for art, and similar grants are made in Germany and elsewhere.

In every large town enormous buildings are erected for museums, academies, conservatoires, dramatic schools, and for performances and concerts. Hundreds of thousands of workmen,—carpenters, masons, painters, joiners, paper-hangers, tailors, hairdressers, jewellers, moulders, type-setters,—spend their whole lives in hard labour to satisfy the demands of art; so that hardly any other department of human activity, the military excepted, consumes so much energy as this.

Not only is enormous labour spent on this activity, but in it as in war the very lives of men are sacrificed. Hundreds of thousands of people devote their lives from childhood to learning to twirl their legs rapidly (dancers), or to touch notes and strings very rapidly (musicians), or to draw with paint and represent what they see (artists), or to turn every phrase inside out and find a rhyme to every word. And these people, often very kind and clever and capable of all sorts of useful labour, grow savage over their specialised and stupefying occupations and become one-sided and self-complacent specialists, dull to all the serious phenomena of life and skilful only at rapidly twisting their legs, their tongues, or their fingers.

But even this stunting of human life is not the worst. I remember being once at the rehearsal of one of the most ordinary of the new operas which are produced at all the opera houses of Europe and America.

I arrived when the first act had already commenced. To reach the auditorium I had to pass through the stage-entrance. By dark entrances and passages, past immense machines for changing the scenery and for lighting the stage

and the theatre, I was led through the vaults of an enormous building; and there in the gloom and dust I saw workmen busily engaged. One of these men—pale, haggard, in a dirty blouse, with dirty, work-worn hands and cramped fingers, evidently tired and out of humour—went past me, angrily scolding another man. Ascending by a dark stair, I came out on the boards behind the scenes. Amid various poles and rings and scattered scenery decorations and curtains, stood and moved dozens, if not hundreds, of painted and dressed-up men in costumes fitting tight to their thighs and calves, and also women, who were as usual, as nearly nude as might be. These were all singers, or members of the chorus, or ballet-dancers, awaiting their turns. My guide led me across the stage and, by means of a bridge of boards, across the orchestra (in which perhaps a hundred musicians of all kinds, from kettle-drum to flute and harp, were seated), to the dark pit-stalls.

On an elevation between two lamps with reflectors and in an arm-chair placed before a music-stand, sat the director of the musical part, *bâton* in hand, managing the orchestra and singers and in general the production of the whole opera.

The performance had already commenced, and on the stage was being represented a procession of Indians who had brought home a bride. Besides men and women in costume, two other men in ordinary clothes bustled and ran about on the stage: one was the director of the dramatic part, and the other, who stepped about in soft shoes and ran from place to place with unusual agility, was the dancing-master, whose salary per month exceeded what ten labourers earn in a year.

These three directors arranged the singing, the orchestra, and the procession. The procession, as usual, was enacted by men and women in couples with tinfoil halberds on their shoulders. They all came from one place and walked round and round again and then stopped. The procession took a

long time to arrange: first the Indians with halberds came on too late, then too soon; then at the right time, but crowded together at the exit; then they did not crowd, but arranged themselves badly at the sides of the stage,—and each time the whole performance was stopped and recommenced from the beginning. The procession is preceded by a recitative, delivered by a man dressed up like some variety of Turk, who, opening his mouth in a curious way, sings, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." He sings, and waves his arm (which is of course bare) from under his mantle. The procession commences. But here the French horn, in the accompaniment of the recitative, does something wrong; and the director, with a shudder as if some catastrophe had occurred, raps with his stick on the stand. All is stopped, and the director, turning to the orchestra, attacks the French horn, scolding him in the rudest terms, as cabmen abuse one another, for taking the wrong note. And again the whole thing recommences. The Indians with their halberds again come on, treading softly in their extraordinary boots; again the singer sings, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." But here the pairs get too close together. More raps with the stick, more scolding, and a recommencement. Again "Home I bring the bri-i-ide," again the same gesticulation with the bare arm from under the mantle, and again the couples, treading softly with halberds on their shoulders, some with sad and serious faces, some talking and smiling, arrange themselves in a circle and begin to sing. All seems to be going well, but again the stick raps and the director, in a distressed and angry voice, begins to scold the men and women of the chorus. It appears that when singing they had omitted to raise their hands from time to time in sign of animation. "Are you all dead, or what? Cows that you are! Are you corpses, that you can't move?" Again they re-commence, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide," and again, with sorrowful faces, the chorus women sing, first one

and then another of them raising their hands. But two chorus-girls speak to each other,—again a more vehement rapping with the stick. "Have you come here to talk? Can't you gossip at home? You there in red breeches, come nearer. Look at me! Begin again!" Again "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." And so it goes on for one, two, three hours. The whole of such a rehearsal lasts six hours on end. Raps with the stick, repetitions, placings, corrections of the singers, of the orchestra, of the procession, of the dancers,—all seasoned with angry scolding. I heard the words, "asses," "fools," "idiots," "swine," addressed to the musicians and singers at least forty times in the course of one hour. And the unhappy individual to whom the abuse is addressed—flautist, horn-blower, or singer,—physically and mentally demoralised, does not reply and does what is demanded of him. Twenty times is repeated the one phrase, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide," and twenty times the striding about in yellow shoes with a halberd over the shoulder. The conductor knows that these people are so demoralised that they are no longer fit for anything but to blow trumpets and walk about with halberds and in yellow shoes, and that they are also accustomed to dainty easy living, so that they will put up with anything rather than lose their luxurious life. He therefore gives free vent to his churlishness, especially as he has seen the same thing done in Paris and Vienna, and knows that this is the way the best conductors behave, and that it is a musical tradition of great artists to be so carried away by the great business of their art that they cannot pause to consider the feelings of other artists.

It would be difficult to find a more repulsive sight. I have seen one workman abuse another for not supporting the weight piled upon him when goods were being unloaded, or, at hay-stacking, the village Elder scold a peasant for not making the rick right, and the man submitted in silence. And however unpleasant it was to witness the scene, the unpleasant-

ness was lessened by the consciousness that the business in hand was necessary and important and that the fault for which the Elder scolded the labourer was one which might spoil a needful undertaking.

But what was being done here? For what, and for whom? Very likely the conductor was tired out, like the workman I passed in the vaults; it was even evident that he was; but who made him tire himself? And why was he tiring himself? The opera he was rehearsing was one of the most ordinary of operas for people who are accustomed to them, but also one of the most gigantic absurdities that could possibly be devised. An Indian king wants to marry; they bring him a bride; he disguises himself as a minstrel; the bride falls in love with the minstrel and is in despair, but afterwards discovers that the minstrel is the king, and everyone is highly delighted.

That there never were, or could be, such Indians, and that they were not only unlike Indians, but that what they were doing was unlike anything on earth except other operas, was beyond all manner of doubt; that people do not converse in such a way as recitative, and do not place themselves at fixed distances, in a quartet, waving their arms to express their emotions; that nowhere, except in theatres, do people walk about in such a manner, in pairs, with tinfoil halberds and in slippers; that no one ever gets angry in such a way, or is affected in such a way, or laughs in such a way, or cries in such a way; and that no one on earth can be moved by such performances,—all this is beyond the possibility of doubt.

Instinctively the question presents itself: For whom is this being done? Whom *can* it please? If there are occasionally good melodies in the opera to which it is pleasant to listen, they could have been sung simply, without these stupid costumes and all the processions and recitatives and hand-wavings.

The ballet, in which half-naked women make voluptuous

movements, twisting themselves into various sensual wreathings, is simply a lewd performance.

So one is quite at a loss as to whom these things are done for. The man of culture is heartily sick of them, while to a real working man they are utterly incomprehensible. If anyone can be pleased by these things (which is doubtful), it can only be some young footman or depraved artisan, who has contracted the spirit of the upper classes but is not yet satiated with their amusements and wishes to show his breeding.

And all this nasty folly is prepared, not simply, nor with kindly merriment, but with anger and brutal cruelty.

It is said that it is all done for the sake of art, and that art is a very important thing. But is it true that art is so important that such sacrifices should be made for its sake? This question is especially urgent, because art, for the sake of which the labour of millions, the lives of men and, above all, love between man and man, are all being sacrificed,—this very art is becoming something more and more vague and uncertain to human perception.

Criticism, in which the lovers of art used to find support for their opinions, has latterly become so self-contradictory that if we exclude from the domain of art all to which the critics of various schools themselves deny the title, there is scarcely any art left.

The artists of various sects, like the theologians of various sects, mutually exclude and destroy one another. Listen to the artists of the schools of our times, and in all branches you will find each set of artists disowning others. In poetry the old romanticists deny the parnassians and the decadents; the parnassians disown the romanticists and the decadents; the decadents disown all their predecessors and the symbolists; the symbolists disown all their predecessors and *les mages;* and *les mages* disown all, all their predecessors. Among novelists

we have naturalists, psychologists, and "nature-ists," all rejecting each other. And it is the same in dramatic art, in painting, and in music. So that art, which demands such tremendous labour-sacrifices from the people, which stunts human lives and transgresses against human love, is not only *not* a thing clearly and firmly defined, but is understood in such contradictory ways by its own devotees that it is difficult to say what is meant by art, and especially what is good, useful art,—art for the sake of which we might condone such sacrifices as are being offered at its shrine.

CHAPTER II

Does art compensate for so much evil? What is art? Confusion of opinions. Is it "that which produces beauty"? The word "beauty" in Russian. Chaos in esthetics.

For the production of every ballet, circus, opera, operetta, exhibition, picture, concert, or printed book, the intense and unwilling labour of thousands and thousands of people is needed at what is often harmful and humiliating work. It were well if artists made all they require for themselves, but as it is they all need the help of workmen, not only to produce art, but also for their own usually luxurious maintenance. And one way or other they get it, either through payments from rich people, or through subsidies given by Government (in Russia, for instance, in grants of millions of roubles to theatres, conservatoires and academies). This money is collected from the people, some of whom have to sell their only cow to pay the tax, and who never get those esthetic pleasures which art gives.

It was all very well for a Greek or Roman artist, or even for a Russian artist of the first half of the nineteenth century (when there still were slaves and it was considered right that there should be), with a quiet mind to make people serve him and his art; but in our day, when in all men there is at least some dim perception of the equal rights of all, it is impossible to constrain people to labour unwillingly for art, without first deciding the question whether it is true that art is so good and so important an affair as to redeem this evil.

If not, we have the terrible probability to consider, that while fearful sacrifices of the labour and lives of men and

of morality itself are being made to art, that same art may be not only useless but even harmful.

And therefore it is necessary for a society in which works of art arise and are supported, to find out whether all that professes to be art is really art; whether (as is presupposed in our society) all that is art is good, and whether it is important, and worth those sacrifices which it necessitates. It is still more necessary for every conscientious artist to know this, in order that he may be sure that all he does has a valid meaning,—that it is not merely an infatuation of the small circle of people among whom he lives which excites in him the false assurance that he is doing a good work—and that what he takes from others for the support of his often very luxurious life will be compensated for by those productions at which he works. And that is why answers to the above questions are especially important in our time.

What is this art, which is considered so important and necessary for humanity that for its sake these sacrifices of labour, of human life, and even of goodness, may be made?

"What is art? What a question! Art is architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry in all its forms," usually replies the ordinary man, the art amateur, or even the artist himself, imagining the matter about which he is talking to be perfectly clear, and uniformly understood by everybody. But in architecture, one inquires further, are there not simple buildings which are not objects of art, and buildings with artistic pretensions which are unsuccessful and ugly and therefore not to be considered as works of art?—wherein lies the characteristic sign of a work of art?

It is the same in sculpture, in music, and in poetry. Art, in all its forms, is bounded on one side by the practically useful and on the other by unsuccessful attempts at art. How is art to be marked off from each of these? The ordinary educated man of our circle, and even the artist who

has not occupied himself specially with esthetics, will not hesitate at this question either. He thinks the solution has been found long ago, and is well known to everyone.

"Art is such activity as produces beauty," says such a man.

If art consists in that,—then is a ballet or an operetta art? you inquire.

"Yes," says the ordinary man, though with some hesitation, "a good ballet or a graceful operetta is also art, in so far as it manifests beauty."

But without even asking the ordinary man what differentiates the "good" ballet and the "graceful" operetta from their opposites (a question he would have much difficulty in answering), if you ask him whether the activity of costumers and hairdressers, who ornament the figures and faces of the women for the ballet and the operetta, is art; or the activity of Worth, the dressmaker; of scent-makers and men-cooks, then he will in most cases deny that their activity belongs to the domain of art. But in this the ordinary man makes a mistake, just because he is an ordinary man and not a specialist, and because he has not occupied himself with esthetic questions. Had he looked into these matters, he would have seen in the great Renan's book, *Marc Aurèle,* a dissertation showing that the dressmaker's work is art, and that those who do not see in the adornment of woman an affair of the highest art are very small-minded and dull. *"C'est le grand art,"* says Renan. Moreover, he would have known that in many esthetic systems—for instance, in the esthetics of the learned Professor Kralik, *Weltschönheit, Versuch einer allgemeinen Æsthetik, von Richard Kralik,* and in *Les problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine,* by Guyau—the arts of costume, of taste, and of touch are included.

"Es Folgt nun ein Fünfblatt von Künsten, die der subjectiven Sinnlichkeit entkeimen" (There results then a pentafoliate of arts, growing out of the subjective perceptions), says

Kralik (p. 175). *"Sie sind die ästhetische Behandlung der fünf Sinne."* (They are the esthetic treatment of the five senses.)

These five arts are the following:—

Die Kunst des Geschmacksinns—The art of the sense of taste (p. 175).

Die Kunst des Geruchsinns—The art of the sense of smell (p. 177).

Die Kunst des Tastsinns—The art of the sense of touch (p. 180).

Die Kunst des Gehörsinns—The art of the sense of hearing (p. 182).

Die Kunst des Gesichtsinns—The art of the sense of sight (p. 184).

Of the first of these—*die Kunst des Geschmacksinns*—he says: *Man hält zwar gewöhnlich nur zwei oder hochstens drei Sinne für würdig den Stoff künstlerischer Behandlung abzugeben, aber ich glaube nur mit bedingtem Recht. Ich will kein allzugroses Gewicht darauf legen, dass der gemeine Sprachgebrauch manch andere Künste, wie zum Beispiel die Kochkunst kennt.*[1]

And further: *Und es ist doch gewiss eine ästhetische Leistung, wenn es der Kochkunst gelingt aus einem thierischen Kadaver einen Gegenstand des Geschmacks in jedem Sinne zu machen. Der Grundsatz der Kunst des Geschmacksinns (die weiter ist als die sogenannte Kochkunst) ist also dieser: Es soll alles Geniessbare als Sinnbild einer Idee behandelt werden und in jedesmaligem Einklang zur auszudrückendem Idee.*[2]

[1] Only two, or at most three, senses are generally held worthy to supply matter for artistic treatment, but I think this opinion is only conditionally correct. I will not lay too much stress on the fact that our common speech recognises many other arts, as, for instance, the art of cookery.

[2] And yet it is certainly an esthetic achievement when the art of cooking succeeds in making of an animal's corpse an object in all respects tasteful. The

This author, like Renan, acknowledges a *Kostümkunst* (Art of Costume) (p. 200), etc.

Such is also the opinion of the French writer, Guyau, who is highly esteemed by some authors of our day. In his book, *Les Problèmes de l'esthétique contemporaine,* he speaks seriously of touch, taste, and smell as giving, or being capable of giving, esthetic impressions: *Si la couleur manque au toucher, il nous fournit en revanche une notion que l'œil seul ne peut nous donner, et qui a une valeur esthétique considérable, celle du* doux, *du* soyeux, *du* poli. *Ce qui caractérise la beaute du velour c'est sa douceur au toucher non moins que son brillant. Dans l'idée que nous nous faisons de la beauté d'une femme, le velouté de sa peau entre comme élément essentiel.*

Chacun de nous probablement avec un peu d'attention se rappellera des jouissances du goút, qui ont éte de veritables jouissances esthétiques.[1] And he recounts how a glass of milk drunk by him in the mountains gave him esthetic enjoyment.

So it turns out that the conception of art as consisting in making beauty manifest is not at all so simple as it seemed, especially now, when in this conception of beauty are included our sensations of touch and taste and smell, as they are by the latest esthetic writers.

But the ordinary man either does not know, or does not wish to know, all this, and is firmly convinced that all ques-

principle of the Art of Taste (which goes beyond the so-called Art of Cookery) is therefore this: All that is eatable should be treated as the symbol of some Idea, and always in harmony with the Idea to be expressed.

[1] If the sense of touch lacks colour, it gives us, on the other hand, a notion which the eye alone cannot afford, and one of considerable esthetic value, namely, that of *softness, silkiness, polish.* The beauty of velvet is characterised not less by its softness to the touch than by its lustre. In the idea we form of a woman's beauty, the softness of her skin enters as an essential element.

Each of us probably, with a little attention, can recall pleasures of taste which have been real esthetic pleasures.

tions about art may be simply and clearly solved by acknowledging beauty to be the content of art. To him it seems clear and comprehensible that art consists in manifesting beauty, and that a reference to beauty will serve to explain all questions about art.

But what is this beauty which forms the content of art? How is it defined? What is it?

As is always the case, the more cloudy and confused the conception conveyed by a word, with the more *aplomb* and self-assurance do people use that word, pretending that what is understood by it is so simple and clear that it is not worth while even to discuss what it actually means.

This is how matters of orthodox religion are usually dealt with, and this is how people now deal with the conception of beauty. It is taken for granted that what is meant by the word beauty is known and understood by everyone. And yet not only is this not known, but after whole mountains of books have been written on the subject by the most learned and profound thinkers during one hundred and fifty years (ever since Baumgarten founded esthetics in the year 1750), the question, What is beauty? remains to this day quite unsolved, and in each new work on esthetics it is answered in a new way. One of the last books I read on esthetics is a not ill-written booklet by Julius Mithalter, called *Rätsel des Schönen* (*The Enigma of the Beautiful*). And that title precisely expresses the position of the question, What is beauty? After thousands of learned men have discussed it during one hundred and fifty years, the meaning of the word beauty remains an enigma still. The Germans answer the question in their manner, though in a hundred different ways; the physiological estheticians, especially the Englishmen: Herbert Spencer, Grant Allen, and his school, answer it each in his own way; the French eclectics, and the followers of Guyau and Taine, also each in his own way; and all these people know all the

preceding solutions given by Baumgarten, and Kant, and Schelling, and Schiller, and Fichte, and Winckelmann, and Lessing, and Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, and Schasler, and Cousin, and Lévêque and others.

What is this strange conception of "beauty," which seems so simple to those who talk without thinking, but in defining which all the philosophers of various tendencies and different nationalities can come to no agreement during a century and a half? What is this conception of beauty, on which the dominant doctrine of art rests?

In Russian, by the word *krasota* (beauty) we mean only that which pleases the sight. And though latterly people have begun to speak of "an ugly deed," or of "beautiful music," it is not good Russian.

A Russian of the common folk, not knowing foreign languages, will not understand you if you tell him that a man who has given his last coat to another, or done anything similar, has acted "beautifully," that a man who has cheated another has done an "ugly" action, or that a song is "beautiful."

In Russian a deed may be kind and good, or unkind and bad. Music may be pleasant and good, or unpleasant and bad; but there can be no such thing as "beautiful" or "ugly" music.

Beautiful may relate to a man, a horse, a house, a view, or a movement. Of actions thoughts character or music, if they please us, we may say that they are good, or, if they do not please us, that they are bad. But beautiful can be used only concerning that which pleases the sight. So that the word and conception "good" includes the conception of "beautiful"; but the reverse is not true; the conception "beauty" does not include the conception "good." If we say "good" of an article which we value for its appearance, we

thereby say that the article is beautiful; but if we say it is "beautiful," it does not at all mean that the article is a good one.

Such is the meaning ascribed by the Russian language, and therefore by the sense of the people, to the words and conceptions "good" and "beautiful."

In all the European languages, that is, in the languages of those nations among whom the doctrine has spread that beauty is the essential thing in art, the words *"beau" "schön,"* "beautiful," *"bello,"* etc., while keeping their meaning of beautiful in form, have come also to express "goodness," "kindness," that is to say, have come to act as substitutes for the word "good."

So that it has become quite natural in those languages to use such expressions as *"belle ame," "schöne Gedanken,"* or "beautiful deed." Those languages no longer have a suitable word wherewith expressly to indicate beauty of form, and have to use a combination of words such as *"beau par la forme," "beautiful to look at,"* and so forth, to convey that idea.

Observation of the divergent meanings which the words "beauty" and "beautiful" have in Russian on the one hand, and in those European languages now permeated by this esthetic theory on the other hand, shows us that the word "beauty" has among the latter acquired a special meaning, namely, that of "good."

What is remarkable, moreover, is that since we Russians have begun more and more to adopt the European view of art, the same evolution has begun to show itself in our language also, and some people speak and write quite confidently, and without causing surprise, of beautiful music and ugly actions, and even of beautiful or ugly thoughts; whereas forty years ago, when I was young, the expressions "beautiful

music" and "ugly actions" were not only unusual but incomprehensible. Evidently this new meaning given to beauty by European thought begins to be assimilated by Russian society.

And what really is this meaning? What is this "beauty" as understood by the European peoples?

In order to answer this question, I must here quote at least a small selection of those definitions of beauty most generally adopted in existing esthetic systems. I particularly beg the reader not to be overcome by dulness, but to read these extracts through, or still better to read some one of the erudite esthetic authors. Not to mention the voluminous German estheticians, a very good book for this purpose would be either the German book by Kralik, the English work by Knight, or the French one by Lévêque. It is necessary to read at least one of the learned esthetic writers in order to form at first-hand a conception of the variety of opinion and the frightful obscurity which reigns in this region of speculation; not in this important matter trusting to another's report.

This for instance is what the German esthetician Schasler says in the preface to his famous, voluminous, and detailed work on esthetics:—

"In hardly any sphere of philosophic science can we find such divergent methods of investigation and exposition, amounting even to self-contradiction, as in the sphere of esthetics. On the one hand we have elegant phraseology without any substance, characterised in great part by most one-sided superficiality; and on the other hand, accompanying undeniable profundity of investigation and richness of subject-matter, we get a revolting awkwardness of philosophic terminology clothing the simplest thoughts in an apparel of abstract science as though to render them worthy to enter the consecrated palace of the system; and finally, between these

two methods of investigation and exposition, there is a third, forming as it were the transition from one to the other, an eclectic method,—now flaunting an elegant phraseology and now a pedantic erudition. . . . A style of exposition that falls into none of these three defects but is truly concrete, and having important matter expresses it in clear and popular philosophic language, can nowhere be found less frequently than in the domain of esthetics." [1]

It is only necessary, as an example, to read Schasler's own book to convince oneself of the justice of this observation of his.

On the same subject the French writer, Véron, in the preface to his very good work on esthetics, says, "*Il n'y a pas de science, qui ait été plus que l'esthétique livrée aux rêveries des métaphysiciens. Depuis Platon jusqu'aux doctrines officielles de nos jours, on a fait de l'art je ne sais quel amalgame de fantaisies quintessenciées, et de mystères transcendantaux qui trouvent leur expression suprême dans la conception absolue du Beau idéal, prototype immuable et divin des choses réelles*" (*L'esthétique,* 1878, p. 5).[2]

If the reader will only be at the pains to peruse the following extracts defining beauty, taken from the chief writers on esthetics, he may convince himself that this censure is thoroughly deserved.

I shall not quote the definitions of beauty attributed to the ancients,—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others, down to Plotinus,—because, in reality, the ancients had not that conception of beauty separated from goodness which forms the

[1] M. Schasler, *Kritische Geschichte der Aesthetik,* 1872, Vol. I, p. 13.

[2] There is no science which more entirely than esthetics has been handed over to the dreams of the metaphysicians. From Plato down to the received doctrines of our day, people have made of art a strange amalgam of quintessential fancies and transcendental mysteries, which find their supreme expression in the conception of an absolute ideal Beauty, immutable and divine prototype of actual things.

basis and aim of esthetics in our time. By referring the judgments of the ancients on beauty to our conception of it, as is usually done in esthetics, we give the words of the ancients a meaning which is not theirs.[1]

[1] See on this matter Bernard's admirable book, *L'esthétique d'Aristote,* also Walter's *Geschichte der Aesthetik im Altertum.*

CHAPTER III

Summary of various esthetic theories and definitions, from Baumgarten to the present day.

I BEGIN with the founder of esthetics, Baumgarten (1714–1762).

According to Baumgarten,[1] the object of logical knowledge is Truth, the object of esthetic (*i. e.*, sensuous) knowledge is Beauty. Beauty is the Perfect (the Absolute), recognised through the senses; Truth is the Perfect perceived through reason; Goodness is the Perfect reached by moral will.

Beauty is defined by Baumgarten as a correspondence, that is, an order of the parts in their mutual relations to each other and in their relation to the whole. The aim of beauty itself is to please and excite a desire,"*Wohlegefallen und Erregung eines Verlangens.*" (A position precisely the opposite to Kant's definition of the nature and sign of beauty.)

With reference to the manifestations of beauty, Baumgarten considers that the highest embodiment of beauty is visible to us in nature, and he therefore thinks that the highest aim of art is to copy nature. (This position also is directly contradicted by the conclusions of the latest estheticians.)

Passing over the unimportant followers of Baumgarten,—Maier, Eschenburg, and Eberhard,—who only slightly modified the doctrine of their teacher by dividing the pleasant from the beautiful, I will quote the definitions given by writers who came immediately after Baumgarten and defined beauty in quite another way. These writers were Sulzer, Mendelssohn, and Moritz. They, in contradiction to Baumgarten's

[1] Schasler p. 361.

main position, recognise as the aim of art not beauty, but goodness. Thus Sulzer (1720–1777) says, only that can be considered beautiful which contains goodness. According to his theory, the aim of the whole life of humanity is welfare in social life. This is attained by the education of the moral feelings, to which end art should be subservient. Beauty is that which evokes and educates this feeling.

Beauty is understood almost in the same way by Mendelssohn (1729–1786). According to him, art is the development of the beautiful, obscurely recognised by feeling, till it becomes the true and good. The aim of art is moral perfection.[1]

For the estheticians of this school the ideal of beauty is a beautiful soul in a beautiful body. So that these estheticians completely wipe out Baumgarten's division of the Perfect (the Absolute), into the three forms of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty; and Beauty again merges into the Good and the True.

But this conception is not only not maintained by the later estheticians, but the esthetic doctrine of Winckelmann arises, again in complete opposition. This divides the mission of art from the aim of goodness in the sharpest and most positive manner, makes external beauty the aim of art, and even limits it to visible beauty.

According to the celebrated work of Winckelmann (1717–1767), the law and aim of all art is beauty only, beauty quite separated from and independent of goodness. There are three kinds of beauty:—(1) beauty of form, (2) beauty of idea, expressing itself in the position of the figure (in plastic art), (3) beauty of expression, attainable only when the two first conditions are present. This beauty of expression is the highest aim of art, and is attained in antique art; modern art should therefore aim at imitating ancient art.[2]

Art is similarly understood by Lessing, Herder, and after-

[1] Schasler, p. 369.

[2] Schasler, pp. 388–390.

wards by Goethe and by all the distinguished estheticians of Germany till Kant, from whose day, again, a different conception of art commences.

Native esthetic theories arose during this period in England, France, Italy, and Holland, and they, though not taken from the German, were equally cloudy and contradictory. And all these writers, just like the German estheticians, founded their theories on a conception of the Beautiful; understanding beauty in the sense of a something existing absolutely and more or less intermingled with Goodness, or having one and the same root. In England almost simultaneously with Baumgarten, even a little earlier, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Home, Burke, Hogarth, and others, wrote on art.

According to Shaftesbury (1670–1713), "That which is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable, what is harmonious and proportionable is true, and what is at once both beautiful and true is of consequence agreeable and good." [1] Beauty, he taught, is recognised by the mind only. God is fundamental beauty; beauty and goodness proceed from the same fount.

So that, although Shaftesbury regards beauty as being something separate from goodness, they again merge into something inseparable.

According to Hutcheson (1694–1747—*Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*), the aim of art is beauty, the essence of which consists in evoking in us the perception of uniformity and variety. In the recognition of what is art we are guided by "an internal sense." This internal sense may be in contradiction to the ethical one. So that according to Hutcheson beauty does not always correspond with goodness, but separates from it and is sometimes contrary to it.[2]

[1] Knight, *Philosophy of the Beautiful,* Vol. I, pp. 165, 166.

[2] Schasler, p. 289. Knight, pp. 168, 169.

According to Home, Lord Kames, (1696–1782), beauty is that which is pleasant. Therefore beauty is defined by taste alone. The standard of true taste is that the maximum of richness, fulness, strength, and variety of impression, should be contained within the narrowest limits. That is the ideal of a perfect work of art.

According to Burke (1729–1797—*Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*), the sublime and beautiful, which are the aim of art, have their origin in the promptings of self-preservation and of society. These feelings, examined at their source, are means for the maintenance of the race through the individual. The first (self-preservation) is attained by nourishment, defence, and war; the second (society) by intercourse and propagation. Therefore self-defence and war, which is bound up with it, is the source of the sublime; sociability and the sex-instinct, which is bound up with it, is the source of beauty.[1]

Such were the chief English definitions of art and beauty in the eighteenth century.

During the same period, the writers on art in France, were Père André and Batteux, with Diderot, D'Alembert, and to some extent Voltaire, following later.

According to Père André (*Essai sur le Beau,* 1741), there are three kinds of beauty—divine beauty, natural beauty, and artificial beauty.[2]

According to Batteux (1713–1780), art consists in imitating the beauty of nature, its aim being enjoyment.[3] Such also is Diderot's definition of art.

The French writers, like the English, hold that it is taste that decides what is beautiful. And the laws of taste are not only not laid down, but it is granted that they cannot be

[1] R. Kralik, *Weltschönheit, Versuch einer allgemeinen Aesthetik,* pp. 304–306.
[2] Knight, p. 101.
[3] Schasler, p. 316.

settled. The same view was held by D'Alembert and Voltaire.[1]

According to Pagano, the Italian esthetician of that period, art consists in uniting the beauties dispersed in nature. The capacity to perceive these beauties is taste, the capacity to bring them into one whole is artistic genius. Beauty commingles with goodness, so that beauty is goodness made visible, and goodness is inner beauty.[2]

According to the opinion of other Italians: Muratori (1672–1750),—*Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le science e le arti,*—and especially Spaletti,[3]—*Saggio sopra la bellezza* (1765),—art amounts to an egotistical sensation, founded (as with Burke) on the desire for self-preservation and society.

Among Dutch writers, Hemsterhuis (1720–1790), who had an influence on the German estheticians and on Goethe, is remarkable. According to him, beauty is that which gives most pleasure, and that gives most pleasure which gives us the greatest number of perceptions in the shortest time. Enjoyment of the beautiful, because it gives the greatest quantity of perceptions in the shortest time, is the highest cognition to which man can attain.[4]

Such were the esthetic theories outside Germany during the last century. In Germany, after Wincklemann, there again arose a completely new esthetic theory, that of Kant (1724–1804), which more than all others clears up what this conception of beauty, and consequently of art, really amounts to.

The esthetic teaching of Kant is founded as follows:—Man has a knowledge of nature outside him and of himself in nature. In nature outside himself he seeks for truth; in himself he seeks for goodness. The first is an affair of pure reason, the other of practical reason (free-will).

[1] Knight, pp. 102–104.
[2] R. Kralik, p. 124.
[3] Schasler, p. 328.
[4] Schasler, pp. 331–333.

Besides these two means of perception, there is also the judging capacity (*Urteilskraft*), which forms judgments without reasoning and produces pleasure without desire (*Urtheil ohne Begriff und Vergnügen ohne Begehren*). This capacity is the basis of esthetic feeling. Beauty, according to Kant, in its subjective meaning is that which in general and necessarily, without reasoning and without practical advantage, pleases; and in its objective meaning it is the form of an object suitable for its purpose in so far as that object is perceived without any conception of its utility.[1]

Beauty is defined in the same way by the followers of Kant, among whom was Schiller (1759–1805). According to Schiller, who wrote much on esthetics, the aim of art is, as with Kant, beauty, the source of which is pleasure without practical advantage. So that art may be called a game, not in the sense of an unimportant occupation, but in the sense of a manifestation of the beauties of life itself without other aim than that of beauty.[2]

Besides Schiller, the most remarkable of Kant's followers in the sphere of esthetics was Wilhelm Humboldt, who, though he added nothing to the definition of beauty, explained various forms of it,—the drama, music, humour, etc.[3]

After Kant, besides the second-rate philosophers, the writers on esthetics were Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and their followers.

Fichte (1762–1814) says that perception of the beautiful proceeds from this: the world—that is, nature—has two sides: it is the sum of our limitations, and it is the sum of our free idealistic activity. In the first aspect the world is limited, in the second aspect it is free. In the first aspect every object is limited, distorted, compressed, confined—and we see deformity; in the second we perceive its inner completeness,

[1] Schasler, pp. 525–528.

[2] Knight, pp. 61–63.

[3] Schasler, pp. 740–743.

vitality, regeneration—and we see beauty. So that the deformity or beauty of an object, according to Fichte, depends on the point of view of the observer. Beauty therefore exists, not in the world but in the beautiful soul (*schöner Geist*). Art is the manifestation of this beautiful soul, and its aim is the education, not of the mind only—that is the business of the *savant;* not of the heart only—that is the affair of the moral preacher; but of the whole man. And so the characteristic of beauty lies not in anything external, but in the presence of a beautiful soul in the artist.[1]

Following Fichte, and in the same direction, Friedrich Schlegel and Adam Müller also defined beauty. According to Schlegel (1772–1829), beauty in art is understood too incompletely, one-sidedly, and disconnectedly. Beauty exists not only in art but also in nature and in love; so that the truly beautiful is expressed by the union of art, nature, and love. Therefore, as inseparably one with esthetic art, Schlegel acknowledges moral and philosophic art.[2]

According to Adam Müller (1779–1829), there are two kinds of beauty: the one, general beauty, which attracts people as the sun attracts the planet—this is found chiefly in antique art—and the other, individual beauty, which results from the observer himself becoming a sun attracting beauty, —this is the beauty of modern art. A world in which all contradictions are harmonised is the highest beauty. Every work of art is a reproduction of this universal harmony.[3] The highest art is the art of life.[4]

Next after Fichte and his followers came a contemporary of his, the philosopher Schelling (1775–1845), who has had a great influence on the esthetic conceptions of our times. According to Schelling's philosophy, art is the production or result of that conception of things by which the subject

[1] Schasler, pp. 769–771.
[2] Schasler, pp. 786, 787.
[3] Kralik, p. 148.
[4] Kralik, p. 820.

becomes its own object, or the object its own subject. Beauty is the perception of the infinite in the finite. And the chief characteristic of works of art is unconscious infinity. Art is the uniting of the subjective with the objective, of nature with reason, of the unconscious with the conscious, and therefore art is the highest means of knowledge. Beauty is the contemplation of things in themselves as they exist in the prototype (*in den Urbildern*). It is not the artist who by his knowledge of skill produces the beautiful but the idea of beauty in him itself produces it.[1]

Of Schelling's followers the most noticeable was Solger (1780–1819—*Vorlesungen über Aesthetik*). According to him, the idea of beauty is the fundamental idea of everything. In the world we see only distortions of the fundamental idea, but art, by imagination, may lift itself to the height of this idea. Art is therefore akin to creation.[2]

According to another follower of Schelling, Krause (1781–1832), true, positive beauty is the manifestation of the Idea in an individual form; art is the actualization of the beauty existing in the sphere of man's free spirit. The highest stage of art is the art of life, which directs its activity towards the adornment of life so that it may be a beautiful abode for a beautiful man.[3]

After Schelling and his followers came the new esthetic doctrine of Hegel, which is held to this day, consciously by many but by the majority unconsciously. This teaching is not only no clearer or better defined than the preceding ones, but is if possible even more cloudy and mystical.

According to Hegel (1770–1831), God manifests himself in nature and in art in the form of beauty. God expresses himself in two ways: in the object and in the subject—in nature and in spirit. Beauty is the shining of the Idea

[1] Schasler, pp. 828, 829, 834–841.
[2] Schasler, p. 891.
[3] Schasler, p. 917.

through matter. Only the soul and what pertains to it is truly beautiful, and therefore the beauty of nature is only the reflection of the natural beauty of the spirit—the beautiful has only a spiritual content. But the spiritual must appear in sensuous form. The sensuous manifestation of spirit is only appearance (*schein*), and this appearance is the only reality of the beautiful. Art is thus the production of this appearance of the Idea, and is a means, together with religion and philosophy, of bringing to consciousness, and of expressing, the deepest problems of humanity and the highest truths of the spirit.

Truth and beauty according to Hegel are one and the same thing; the difference being only that truth is the Idea itself as it exists in itself and is thinkable. The Idea, manifested externally, becomes to the apprehension not only true but beautiful. The beautiful is the manifestation of the Idea.[1]

Following Hegel came his many adherents: Weisse, Arnold Ruge, Rosenkrantz, Theodor Vischer and others.

According to Weisse (1801–1867), art is the introduction (*Einbildung*) of the absolute spiritual reality of beauty into external, dead, indifferent matter, the perception of which latter apart from the beauty brought into it presents the negation of all existence in itself (*Negation alles Fürsichseins*).

In the idea of truth, Weisse explains, lies a contradiction between the subjective and the objective sides of knowledge, in that an individual *ego* discerns the Universal. This contradiction can be removed by a conception that should unite into one the universal and the individual, which fall asunder in our conceptions of truth. Such a conception would be reconciled (*aufgehoben*) truth. Beauty is such a reconciled truth.[2]

According to Ruge (1802–1880), a strict follower of

[1] Schasler, pp. 946, 1085, 984, 985, 990.

[2] Schasler, pp. 966, 655, 956.

Hegel, beauty is the Idea expressing itself. The spirit, contemplating itself, either finds itself expressed completely, and then that full expression of itself is beauty; or incompletely, and then it feels the need to alter this imperfect expression of itself, and becomes creative art.[1]

According to Vischer (1807–1887), beauty is the Idea in the form of a finite phenomenon. The Idea itself is not indivisible, but forms a system of ideas which may be represented by ascending and descending lines. The higher the idea the more beauty it contains; but even the lowest contains beauty, because it forms an essential link of the system. The highest form of the Idea is personality, and therefore the highest art is that which has for its subject-matter the highest personality.[2]

Such were the theories of the German estheticians in the Hegelian direction, but they did not monopolise esthetic dissertations. In Germany, side by side and simultaneously with the Hegelian theories, there appeared theories of beauty not only independent of Hegel's position (that beauty is the manifestation of the Idea), but directly contrary to this view, denying and ridiculing it. Such was the line taken by Herbart and more particularly by Schopenhauer.

According to Herbart (1776–1841), there is not and cannot be any such thing as beauty existing in itself. What does exist is only our opinion, and it is necessary to find the base of this opinion (*Asthetisches Elementarurtheil*). Such bases are connected with our impressions. There are certain relations which we term beautiful; and art consists in finding these relations, which are simultaneous in painting, the plastic art, and architecture; successive and simultaneous in music; and purely successive in poetry. In contradiction to the former estheticians, Herbart holds that objects are often beautiful which express nothing at all, as, for instance,

[1] Schasler, p. 1017.

[2] Schasler, pp. 1065, 1066.

the rainbow, which is beautiful for its lines and colours, and not for its mythological connection with Iris or Noah's rainbow.[1]

Another opponent of Hegel was Schopenhauer, who denied Hegel's whole system, his esthetics included.

According to Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Will objectivizes itself in the world on various planes; and although the higher the plane on which it is objectivized the more beautiful it is, yet each plane has its own beauty. Renunciation of one's individuality and contemplation of one of these planes of manifestation of Will gives us a perception of beauty. All men, says Schopenhauer, possess the capacity to objectivize the Idea on different planes. The genius of the artist has this capacity in a higher degree, and therefore makes a higher beauty manifest.[2]

After these more eminent writers there followed, in Germany, less original and less influential ones, such as Hartmann, Kirchmann, Schnaase, and, to some extent, Helmholtz (as an esthetician), Bergmann, Jungmann, and an innumerable host of others.

According to Hartmann (1842), beauty lies, not in the external world, nor in "the thing in itself," neither does it reside in the soul of man, but it lies in the "seeming" (*Schein*) produced by the artist. The thing in itself is not beautiful, but it is transformed into beauty by the artist.[3]

According to Schnaase (1798–1875), there is no perfect beauty in the world. In nature there is only an approach towards it. Art gives what nature cannot give. In the energy of the free *ego*, conscious of harmony not found in nature, beauty is disclosed.[4]

Kirchmann (1802–1884) wrote on experimental esthetics. All aspects of history in his system are joined by pure chance.

[1] Schasler, pp. 1097–1100.
[2] Schasler, pp. 1124, 1107.
[3] Knight, pp. 81, 82.
[4] Knight, p. 83.

Thus according to him there are six realms of history:—the realm of Knowledge, of Wealth, of Morality, of Faith, of Politics, and of Beauty; and activity in the last-named realm is art.[1]

According to Helmholtz (1821–1894), who wrote on beauty as it relates to music, beauty in musical productions is attained only by following unalterable laws. These laws are not known to the artist; so that beauty is manifested by the artist unconsciously, and cannot be subjected to analysis.[2]

According to Bergmann (b. 1840) (*Ueber das Schöne,* 1887), to define beauty objectively is impossible. Beauty is only perceived subjectively, and therefore the problem of esthetics is to define what pleases whom.[3]

According to Jungmann (d. 1885), firstly, beauty is a suprasensible quality of things; secondly, beauty produces in us pleasure by merely being contemplated; and thirdly, beauty is the foundation of love.[4]

The esthetic theories of the chief representatives of France, England, and other nations, in recent times have been the following:—

In France during this period the prominent writers on esthetics were Cousin, Jouffroy, Pictet, Ravaisson, Lévêque.

Cousin (1792–1867) was an eclectic and a follower of the German idealists. According to his theory, beauty always has a moral foundation. He disputes the doctrine that art is imitation and that the beautiful is what pleases. He affirms that beauty may be defined objectively and that it essentially consists in variety in unity.[5]

After Cousin came Jouffroy (1796–1842), who was a pupil of Cousin's and also a follower of the German estheticians. According to his definition, beauty is the expression of the

[1] Schasler, p. 1121.
[2] Knight, pp. 85, 86.
[3] Knight, p. 88.
[4] Knight, p. 88.
[5] Knight, p. 112.

invisible by those natural signs which manifest it. The visible world is the garment by means of which we see beauty.[1]

The Swiss writer Pictet repeated Hegel and Plato, supposing beauty to exist in the direct and free manifestation of the divine Idea revealing itself in sense forms.[2]

Lévêque was a follower of Schelling and Hegel. He holds that beauty is something invisible behind nature—a force or spirit revealing itself in ordered energy.[3]

Similar vague opinions about the nature of beauty were expressed by the French metaphysician Ravaisson, who considered beauty to be the ultimate aim and purpose of the world. *"La beauté la plus divine et principalement la plus parfaite contient le secret du monde."* [4] And again:—*"Le monde entier est l'œuvre d'une beauté absolue, qui n'est la cause des choses que par l'amour qu'elle met en elles."* [5]

I purposely quote these metaphysical expressions in the original, because, however cloudy the Germans may be, the French, once they absorb the theories of the Germans and take to imitating them, far surpass them in uniting heterogeneous conceptions into one expression and putting forward one meaning or another indiscriminately. For instance, the French philosopher Lachelier, when discussing beauty, says: —*Ne craignons pas de dire, qu'une vérité, qui ne serait; pas belle, ne serait qu'un jeu logique de notre esprit et que la seule vérité solide et digne de ce nom c'est la beaute.*[6]

Besides the esthetic idealists who wrote and still write

[1] Knight, p. 116.

[2] Knight, pp. 118, 119.

[3] Knight, pp. 123, 124.

[4] "The most divine and especially the most perfect beauty contains the secret of the world," *La philosophie en France,* p. 232.

[5] "The whole world is the work of an absolute beauty, which is only the cause of things by the love it puts into them."

[6] "Let us not fear to say that a truth which is not beautiful, is but a logical play of our intelligence, and that the only truth that is solid and worthy of the name is beauty." *Du fondemont de l'induction.*

under the influence of German philosophy, the following recent writers have also influenced the comprehension of art and beauty in France: Taine, Guyau, Cherbuliez, Coster, and Véron.

According to Taine (1828–1893), beauty is the manifestation of the essential characteristic of any important idea more completely than it is expressed in reality.[1]

Guyau (1854–1888) taught that beauty is not something exterior to the object itself,—is not, as it were, a parasitic growth on it,—but is itself the actual blossoming forth of that on which it appears. Art is the expression of reasonable and conscious life, evoking in us both the deepest consciousness of existence and the highest feelings and loftiest thoughts. Art lifts man from his personal life into the universal life, not only by participation in the same ideas and beliefs, but also by similarity in feeling.[2]

According to Cherbuliez, art is an activity, (1) satisfying our innate love of forms (*apparences*), (2) endowing these forms with ideas, (3) affording pleasure alike to our senses, heart, and reason. Beauty is not inherent in objects, but is an act of our souls. Beauty is an illusion; there is no absolute beauty. But what we consider characteristic and harmonious appears beautiful to us.

Coster held that the ideas of the beautiful, the good, and the true, are innate. These ideas illumine our minds and are identical with God, who is Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. The idea of Beauty includes unity of essence, variety of constitutive elements, and order, which brings unity into the various manifestations of life.[3]

For the sake of completeness, I will further cite some of the very latest writings upon art.

La Psychologie du beau et de l'art, par Mario Pilo

[1] *Philosophie de l'art,* Vol. I, 1893, p. 47.
[2] Knight, p. 139–141.
[3] Knight, pp. 134.

(1895), says that beauty is a product of our physical feelings. The aim of art is pleasure, but this pleasure (for some reason) he considers to be necessarily highly moral.

The *Essai sur l'art contemporain, par Fierens Gevaert* (1897), says that art rests on its connection with the past and on the religious ideal of the present which the artist holds when giving to his work the form of his individuality.

Then again, Sar Peladan's *L'art idealiste et mystique* (1894) says that beauty is one of the manifestations of God. *Il n'y a pas d'autre Réalité que Dieu, il n'y a pas d'autre Vérité que Dieu, il n'y a pas d'autre Beauté, que Dieu* (p. 33).[1] This book is very fantastic and very illiterate, but is characteristic in the positions it takes up, and noticeable on account of a certain success it is having with the younger generation in France.

All the esthetics diffused in France up to the present time are similar in kind, but among them Véron's *L'esthétique* (1878) forms an exception, being reasonable and clear. That work, though it does not give an exact definition of art, at least rids esthetics of the cloudy conception of an absolute beauty.

According to Véron (1825–1889), art is the manifestation of emotion transmitted externally by a combination of lines, forms, colours, or by a succession of movements, sounds, or words subjected to certain rhythms.[2]

In England during this period, writers on esthetics define beauty more and more frequently not by its own qualities but by taste, and the discussion of beauty is superseded by a discussion of taste.

After Reid (1704–1796), who acknowledged beauty as being entirely dependent on the spectator, Alison, in his

[1] There is no other Reality than God, there is no other Truth than God, there is no other beauty than God.

[2] *L'esthétique,* p. 106.

Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790), proved the same thing. From another side this was also asserted by Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802), the grandfather of the celebrated Charles Darwin.

He says that we consider beautiful that which is connected in our conception with what we love. Richard Knight's work, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste,* also tends in the same direction.

Most of the English theories of esthetics are on the same lines. The prominent writers on esthetics in England during the nineteenth century were Charles Darwin (to some extent), Herbert Spencer, Grant Allen, Ker, and Knight.

According to Charles Darwin (1809–1882—*Descent of Man,* 1871), beauty is a feeling natural not only to man but also to animals, and consequently to the ancestors of man. Birds adorn their nests and esteem beauty in their mates. Beauty has an influence on marriages. Beauty includes a variety of diverse conceptions. The origin of the art of music is the call of the males to the females.[1]

According to Herbert Spencer (b. 1820), the origin of art is play, a thought previously expressed by Schiller. In the lower animals all the energy of life is expended in life-maintenance and race-maintenance; in man however there remains, after these needs are satisfied, some superfluous strength. This excess is used in play, which passes over into art. Play is an imitation of real activity, so is art. The sources of esthetic pleasure are threefold:—(1) That "which exercises the faculties affected in the most complete way, with the fewest drawbacks from excess of exercise," (2) "the difference of a stimulus in large amount, which awakens a glow of agreeable feeling," (3) the partial revival of the same, with special combinations.[2]

In Todhunter's *Theory of the Beautiful* (1872), beauty is

[1] Knight, p. 238.

[2] Knight, pp. 239, 240.

infinite loveliness, which we apprehend both by reason and by the enthusiasm of love. The recognition of beauty as being such, depends on taste; there can be no criterion for it. The only approach to a definition is found in culture. (What culture is, is not defined.) Intrinsically, art—that which affects us through lines, colours, sounds, or words—is not the product of blind forces but of reasonable ones, working with mutual helpfulness towards a reasonable aim. Beauty is the reconciliation of contradictions.[1]

Grant Allen is a follower of Spencer, and in his *Physiological Æsthetics* (1877) he says that beauty has a physical origin. Esthetic pleasures come from the contemplation of the beautiful, but the conception of beauty is obtained by a physiological process. The origin of art is play: when there is a superfluity of physical strength man gives himself to play; when there is a superfluity of receptive power man gives himself to art. The beautiful is that which affords the maximum of stimulation with the minimum of waste. Differences in the estimation of beauty proceed from taste. Taste can be educated. We must have faith in the judgments "of the finest-nurtured and most discriminative" men. These people form the taste of the next generation.[2]

According to Ker's *Essay on the Philosophy of Art* (1883), beauty enables us to make part of the objective world intelligible to ourselves without being troubled by reference to other parts of it, as is inevitable in science. So that art destroys the opposition between the one and the many, between the law and its manifestation, between the subject and its object, by uniting them. Art is the revelation and vindication of freedom, because it is free from the darkness and incomprehensibility of finite things.[3]

According to Knight's *Philosophy of the Beautiful,*

[1] Knight, pp. 240–243.
[2] Knight, pp. 250–252.
[3] Knight, pp. 258, 259.

Part II (1893), beauty is (as with Schelling) the union of object and subject, the drawing forth from nature of that which is cognate to man, and the recognition in oneself of what is common to all nature.

The opinions on beauty and on art here mentioned are far from exhausting what has been written on the subject. And every day fresh writers on esthetics arise, in whose disquisitions appear the same enchanted confusion and contradictoriness in defining beauty. Some by inertia continue the mystical esthetics of Baumgarten and Hegel, with sundry variations; others transfer the question to the region of subjectivity, and seek for the foundation of the beautiful in questions of taste; others—the estheticians of the very latest formation—seek the origin of beauty in the laws of physiology; and finally, others again investigate the question quite independently of the conception of beauty. Thus, Sully in his *Sensation and Intuition: Studies in Psychology and Æsthetics* (1874) dismisses the conception of beauty altogether; art, by his definition, being the production of some permanent object or passing action fitted to supply active enjoyment to the producer and a pleasurable impression to a number of spectators or listeners, quite apart from any personal advantage derived from it.[1]

[1] Knight, p. 243.

CHAPTER IV

Definitions of art founded on beauty. Taste not definable. A clear definition needed to enable us to recognise works of art.

To what do these definitions of beauty amount? Not reckoning the thoroughly inaccurate definitions of beauty which fail to cover the conception of art and suppose beauty to consist either in utility, or in adjustment to a purpose, or in symmetry, or in order, or in proportion, or in smoothness, or in harmony of the parts, or in unity amid variety, or in various combinations of these,—not reckoning these unsatisfactory attempts at objective definition, all the esthetic definitions of beauty lead to two fundamental conceptions. The first is that beauty is something having an independent existence (existing in itself), that it is one of the manifestations of the absolutely Perfect, of the Idea, of the Spirit, of Will, or of God; the other is that beauty is a kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its object.

The first of these definitions was accepted by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and the philosophising Frenchmen: Cousin, Jouffroy, Ravaisson, and others, not to enumerate the second-rate esthetic philosophers. And this same objective-mystical definition of beauty is held by a majority of the educated people of our day. It is a conception very widely spread especially among the elder generation.

The second view, that beauty is a certain kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its aim, finds favour chiefly among the English esthetic writers, and is shared by the other part of our society, principally by the younger generation.

So there are (and it could not be otherwise) only two definitions of beauty: the one objective, mystical, merging this conception into that of the highest perfection, God—a fantastic definition, founded on nothing; the other on the contrary a very simple, and intelligible, subjective one, which considers beauty to be that which pleases (I do not add to the word "pleases" the words "without the aim of advantage," because "pleases" naturally presupposes the absence of the idea of profit).

On the one hand beauty is viewed as something mystical and very elevated, but unfortunately at the same time very indefinite, and consequently embracing philosophy, religion, and life itself (as in the theories of Schelling and Hegel and their German and French followers); or on the other hand (as necessarily follows from the definition of Kant and his adherents), beauty is simply a certain kind of disinterested pleasure received by us. And this conception of beauty, although it seems very clear, is unfortunately again inexact; for it widens out on the other side, that is, it includes the pleasure derived from drink, from food, from touching a delicate skin, and so forth, as is acknowledged by Guyau, Kralik, and others.

It is true that, following the development of the esthetic doctrines on beauty, we may notice that though at first (in the times when the foundations of the science of esthetics were being laid) the metaphysical definition of beauty prevailed, yet the nearer we get to our own times the more does an experimental definition (recently assuming a physiological form) come to the front, so that at last we even meet with estheticians such as Véron and Sully, who try to escape entirely from the conception of beauty. But such estheticians have very little success, and with the majority of the public as well as of artists and the learned, a conception of beauty is firmly held which agrees with the definitions contained

in most of the esthetic treatises, that is, which regards beauty either as something mystical or metaphysical, or as a special kind of enjoyment.

What then is this conception of beauty, so stubbornly held to by people of our circle and day as furnishing a definition of art?

In its subjective aspect, we call beauty that which supplies us with a particular kind of pleasure.

In its objective aspect, we call beauty something absolutely perfect, and we acknowledge it to be so only because we receive from the manifestation of this absolute perfection a certain kind of pleasure: so that this objective definition is nothing but the subjective conception differently expressed. In reality both conceptions of beauty amount to one and the same thing, namely, the reception by us of a certain kind of pleasure; that is to say, we call "beauty" that which pleases us without evoking in us desire.

Such being the position of affairs, it would seem only natural that the science of art should decline to content itself with a definition of art based on beauty (that is, on that which pleases), and should seek a general definition applicable to all artistic productions, by reference to which we might decide whether a certain article belonged to the realm of art or not. But no such definition is supplied, as the reader may see from those summaries of esthetic theories which I have given, and as he may discover even more clearly from the original esthetic works if he will be at the pains to read them. All attempts to define absolute beauty in itself—whether as an imitation of nature, or as suitability to its object, or as a correspondence of parts, or as symmetry, or as harmony, or as unity in variety, and so forth —either define nothing at all, or define only some traits of some artistic productions and are far from including all that everybody has always held and still holds to be art.

There is no objective definition of beauty. The existing definitions (both the metaphysical and the experimental) amount only to one and the same subjective definition which is (strange as it seems to say so), that art is that which makes beauty manifest, and beauty is that which pleases (without exciting desire). Many estheticians have felt the insufficiency and instability of such a definition and in order to give it a firm basis have asked themselves why a thing pleases. And they have converted the discussion on beauty into a question of taste, as did Hutcheson, Voltaire, Diderot, and others. But all attempts to define what taste is must lead to nothing, as the reader may see both from the history of esthetics and experimentally. There is and can be no explanation of why one thing pleases one man and displeases another, or *vice versâ*. So that the whole existing science of esthetics fails to do what we might expect from it, being a mental activity calling itself a science, namely, it does not define the qualities and laws of art, or of the beautiful (if that be the content of art), or the nature of taste (if taste decides the question of art and its merit), and then on the basis of such definitions acknowledge as art those productions which correspond to these laws and reject those which do not come under them. But this science of esthetics consists in first acknowledging a certain set of productions to be art (because they please us), and then framing such a theory of art that all these productions which please a certain circle of people should fit into it. There exists an art-canon according to which certain productions favoured by our circle are acknowledged as being art,—the works of Phidias, Sophocles, Homer, Titian, Raphael, Bach, Beethoven, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, and others,—and the esthetic laws must be such as to embrace all these productions. In esthetic literature you will incessantly meet with opinions on the merit and importance of art founded not

on any certain laws by which this or that is held to be good or bad but merely on the consideration whether this art tallies with the art-canon we have drawn up.

The other day I was reading a far from ill-written book by Folgeldt. Discussing the demand for morality in works of art, the author plainly says that we must not demand morality in art. And in proof of this he advances the fact that, if we admit such a demand, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* would not fit into the definition of good art; but since both these books are included in our canon of art, he concludes that the demand is unjust. And therefore it is necessary to find a definition of art which shall fit the works; and instead of a demand for morality, Folgeldt postulates as the basis of art a demand for the important (*Bedeutunsvolles*).

All the existing esthetic standards are built on this plan. Instead of giving a definition of true art and then deciding what is and what is not good art by judging whether a work conforms or does not conform to the definition, a certain class of works, which for some reason pleases a certain circle of people, is accepted as being art, and a definition of art is then devised to cover all these productions. I recently came upon a remarkable instance of this method in a very good German work, *The History of Art in the Nineteenth Century,* by Muther. Describing the pre-Raphaelites, the Decadents, and the Symbolists (who are already included in the canon of art), he not only does not venture to blame their tendency, but earnestly endeavours to widen his standard so that it may include them all, since they appear to him to represent a legitimate reaction from the excesses of realism. No matter what insanities appear in art, when once they find acceptance among the upper classes of our society a theory is quickly invented to explain and sanction them; just as if there had never been periods in history when

certain special circles of people recognised and approved false, deformed, and insensate art which subsequently left no trace and has been utterly forgotten. And to what lengths the insanity and deformity of art may go, especially when as in our days it knows that it is considered infallible, may be seen by what is being done in the art of our circle to-day.

So that the theory of art founded on beauty, expounded by esthetics and in dim outline professed by the public, is nothing but the setting up as good of that which has pleased and pleases us, that is, pleases a certain class of people.

In order to define any human activity it is necessary to understand its sense and importance. And in order to do this, it is primarily necessary to examine that activity in itself, in its dependence on its causes, and in connection with its effects, and not merely in relation to the pleasure we can get from it.

If we say that the aim of any activity is merely our pleasure and define it solely by that pleasure, our definition will evidently be a false one. But this is precisely what has occurred in the efforts to define art. Now if we consider the food question, it will not occur to anyone to affirm that the importance of food consists in the pleasure we receive when eating it. Everyone understands that the satisfaction of our taste cannot serve as a basis for our definition of the merits of food, and that we have therefore no right to presuppose that the dinners with cayenne pepper, Limburg cheese, alcohol, and so on, to which we are accustomed and which please us, form the very best human food.

In the same way, beauty, or that which pleases us, can in no sense serve as a basis for the definition of art; nor can a series of objects which afford us pleasure serve as the model of what art should be.

To see the aim and purpose of art in the pleasure we get from it, is like assuming (as is done by people of the lowest

moral development, for instance by savages) that the purpose and aim of food is the pleasure derived when consuming it.

Just as people who conceive the aim and purpose of food to be pleasure cannot recognise the real meaning of eating, so people who consider the aim of art to be pleasure cannot realise its true meaning and purpose, because they attribute to an activity the meaning of which lies in its connection with other phenomena of life, the false and exceptional aim of pleasure. People come to understand that the meaning of eating lies in the nourishment of the body, only when they cease to consider that the object of that activity is pleasure. And it is the same with regard to art. People will come to understand the meaning of art only when they cease to consider that the aim of that activity is beauty, that is to say, pleasure. The acknowledgment of beauty (that is, of a certain kind of pleasure received from art) as being the aim of art, not only fails to assist us in finding a definition of what art is but, on the contrary, by transferring the question into a region quite foreign to art (into metaphysical, psychological, physiological, and even historical discussions as to why such a production pleases one person and such another displeases or pleases someone else), it renders such definition impossible. And since discussions as to why one man likes pears and another prefers meat do not help towards finding a definition of what is essential in nourishment, so the solution of questions of taste in art (to which the discussions on art involuntarily come) not only does not help to make clear what this particular human activity which we call art really consists in, but renders such elucidation quite impossible until we rid ourselves of a conception which justifies every kind of art at the cost of confusing the whole matter.

To the question, What is this art, to which is offered up the labour of millions, the very lives of men, and even

morality itself? we have extracted replies from the existing esthetics which all amount to this: that the aim of art is beauty, that beauty is recognised by the enjoyment it gives, and that artistic enjoyment is a good and important thing, because it *is* enjoyment. In a word, that enjoyment is good because it is enjoyment. Thus what is considered the definition of art is no definition at all, but only a shuffle to justify existing art. Therefore, however strange it may seem to say so, in spite of the mountains of books written about art no exact definition of art has been constructed. And the reason of this is that the conception of art has been based on the conception of beauty.

CHAPTER V

Definitions of art not founded on beauty. Tolstoy's definition. The extent and necessity of art. How people in the past distinguished good from bad in art.

WHAT is art if we put aside the conception of beauty, which confuses the whole matter? The latest and most comprehensible definitions of art, apart from the conception of beauty, are the following:—(1) *a*, Art is an activity arising even in the animal kingdom, and springing from sexual desire and the propensity to play (Schiller, Darwin, Spencer), and *b*, accompanied by a pleasurable excitement of the nervous system (Grant Allen). This is the physiological-evolutionary definition. (2) Art is the external manifestation, by means of lines, colours, movements, sounds, or words, of emotions felt by man (Véron). This is the experimental definition. According to the very latest definition (Sully), (3) Art is "the production of some permanent object or passing action which is fitted not only to supply an active enjoyment to the producer, but to convey a pleasurable impression to a number of spectators or listeners, quite apart from any personal advantage to be derived from it."

Notwithstanding the superiority of these definitions to the metaphysical definitions which depended on the conception of beauty, they are yet far from exact. The first, the physiological-evolutionary definition (1) *a*, is inexact, because instead of speaking about the artistic activity itself, which is the real matter in hand, it treats of the derivation of art. The modification of it, *b*, based on the physiological effects on the human organism, is inexact because within the limits of such definition many other human activities can be

included, as has occurred in the neo-esthetic theories which reckon as art the preparation of handsome clothes, pleasant scents, and even of victuals.

The experimental definition, (2), which makes art consist in the expression of emotions, is inexact because a man may express his emotions by means of lines, colours, sounds, or words, and yet may not act on others by such expression—and then the manifestation of his emotions is not art.

The third definition (that of Sully) is inexact because in the production of objects or actions affording pleasure to the producer and a pleasant emotion to the spectators or hearers apart from personal advantage, may be included the showing of conjuring tricks or gymnastic exercises, and other activities which are not art. And, further, many things the production of which does not afford pleasure to the producer and the sensation received from which is unpleasant: such as gloomy, heart-rending scenes in a poetic description or a play, may nevertheless be undoubted works of art.

The inaccuracy of all these definitions arises from the fact that in them all (as also in the metaphysical definitions) the object considered is the pleasure art may give and not the purpose it may serve in the life of man and of humanity.

In order correctly to define art it is necessary first of all to cease to consider it as a means to pleasure, and to consider it as one of the conditions of human life. Viewing it in this way we cannot fail to observe that art is one of the means of intercourse between man and man.

Every work of art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with him who produced or is producing the art, and with all those who, simultaneously, previously, or subsequently, receive the same artistic impression.

Speech, transmitting the thoughts and experiences of men, serves as a means of union among them, and art serves

a similar purpose. The peculiarity of this latter means of intercourse, distinguishing it from intercourse by means of words, consists in this, that whereas by words a man transmits his thoughts to another, by means of art he transmits his feelings.

The activity of art is based on the fact that a man receiving through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feeling, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it. To take the simplest example: one man laughs and another, who hears, becomes merry; or a man weeps and another, who hears, feels sorrow. A man is excited or irritated, and another man, seeing him, is brought to a similar state of mind. By his movements or by the sounds of his voice a man expresses courage and determination or sadness and calmness, and this state of mind passes on to others. A man suffers, manifesting his sufferings by groans and spasms, and this suffering transmits itself to other people; a man expresses his feelings of admiration, devotion, fear, respect, or love to certain objects, persons, or phenomena, and others are infected by the same feelings of admiration, devotion, fear, respect, or love to the same objects, persons, or phenomena.

And it is on this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feeling, and to experience those feelings himself, that the activity of art is based.

If a man infects another or others directly, immediately, by his appearance or by the sounds he gives vent to at the very time he experiences the feeling; if he causes another man to yawn when he himself cannot help yawning, or to laugh or cry when he himself is obliged to laugh or cry, or to suffer when he himself is suffering—that does not amount to art.

Art begins when one person, with the object of joining another or others to himself in one and the same feeling, expresses that feeling by certain external indications. To

take the simplest example: a boy having experienced, let us say, fear on encountering a wolf, relates that encounter; and in order to evoke in others the feeling he has experienced, describes himself, his condition before the encounter, the surroundings, the wood, his own lightheartedness, and then the wolf's appearance, its movements, the distance between himself and the wolf, and so forth. All this, if only the boy when telling the story, again experiences the feelings he had lived through, and infects the hearers and compels them to feel what he had experienced—is art. Even if the boy had not seen a wolf but had frequently been afraid of one, and if, wishing to evoke in others the fear he had felt, he invented an encounter with a wolf and recounted it so as to make his hearers share the feelings he experienced when he feared the wolf, that also would be art. And just in the same way it is art if a man, having experienced either the fear of suffering or the attraction of enjoyment (whether in reality or in imagination), expresses these feelings on canvas or in marble so that others are infected by them. And it is also art if a man feels or imagines to himself feelings of delight, gladness, sorrow, despair, courage, or despondency and the transition from one to another of these feelings, and expresses them by sounds so that the hearers are infected by them and experience them as they were experienced by the composer.

The feelings with which the artist infects others may be most various—very strong or very weak, very important or very insignificant, very bad or very good: feelings of love of one's country, self-devotion and submission to fate or to God expressed in a drama, raptures of lovers described in a novel, feelings of voluptuousness expressed in a picture, courage expressed in a triumphal march, merriment evoked by a dance, humour evoked by a funny story, the feeling

of quietness transmitted by an evening landscape or by a lullaby, or the feeling of admiration evoked by a beautiful arabesque—it is all art.

If only the spectators or auditors are infected by the feelings which the author has felt, it is art.

To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced and, having evoked it in oneself, then by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others experience the same feeling —this is the activity of art.

Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them.

Art is not as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious Idea of beauty or God; it is not, as the esthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotions by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity.

As, thanks to man's capacity to express thoughts by words, every man may know all that has been done for him in the realms of thought by all humanity before his day, and can, in the present, thanks to this capacity to understand the thoughts of others, become a sharer in their activity and can also himself hand on to his contemporaries and descendants the thoughts he has assimilated from others as well as those which have arisen within himself; so, thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to

him, as well as the feelings experienced by men thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others.

If people lacked this capacity to receive the thoughts conceived by the men who preceded them and to pass on to others their own thoughts, men would be like wild beasts, or like Kasper Hauser.[1]

And if men lacked this other capacity of being infected by art, people might be almost more savage still, and above all more separated from, and more hostile to, one another.

And therefore the activity of art is a most important one, as important as the activity of speech itself and as generally diffused.

As speech does not act on us only in sermons, orations, or books, but in all those remarks by which we interchange thoughts and experiences with one another, so also art, in the wide sense of the word, permeates our whole life, but it is only to some of its manifestations that we apply the term in the limited sense of the word.

We are accustomed to understand art to be only what we hear and see in theatres, concerts, and exhibitions; together with buildings, statues, poems, novels. . . . But all this is but the smallest part of the art by which we communicate with each other in life. All human life is filled with works of art of every kind—from cradle-song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress, and utensils, to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity. So that by art, in the limited sense of the word, we do not mean all human activity transmitting feelings, but only that part which we for some reason

[1] "The foundling of Nuremberg," found in the market-place of that town on 23rd May 1828, apparently some sixteen years old. He spoke little, and was almost totally ignorant even of common objects. He subsequently explained that he had been brought up in confinement underground, and visited by only one man, whom he saw but seldom.

select from it and to which we attach special importance.

This special importance has always been given by all men to that part of this activity which transmits feelings flowing from their religious perception, and this small part they have specifically called art, attaching to it the full meaning of the word.

That was how men of old—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—looked on art. Thus did the Hebrew prophets and the ancient Christians regard art. Thus it was, and still is, understood by the Mohammedans, and thus is it still understood by religious folk among our own peasantry.

Some teachers of mankind—as Plato in his *Republic,* and people such as the primitive Christians, the strict Mohammedans, and the Buddhists—have gone so far as to repudiate all art.

People viewing art in this way (in contradiction to the prevalent view of to-day which regards any art as good if only it affords pleasure) held and hold that art (as contrasted with speech, which need not be listened to) is so highly dangerous in its power to infect people against their wills, that mankind will lose far less by banishing all art than by tolerating each and every art.

Evidently such people were wrong in repudiating all art, for they denied what cannot be denied—one of the indispensable means of communication, without which mankind could not exist. But not less wrong are the people of civilised European society of our class and day, in favouring any art if it but serves beauty, that is, gives people pleasure.

Formerly, people feared lest among the works of art there might chance to be some causing corruption, and they prohibited art altogether. Now they only fear lest they should be deprived of any enjoyment art can afford, and patronise any art. And I think the last error is much grosser than the first, and that its consequences are far more harmful.

CHAPTER VI

How art for the sake of pleasure has come into esteem. Religions indicate what is good and bad. Church Christianity. The Renaissance. Scepticism of the upper classes. They confound beauty with goodness.

But how could it happen that that very art which in ancient times was merely tolerated (if tolerated at all), should have come in our times to be invariably considered a good thing if only it affords pleasure?

It has resulted from the following causes. The estimation of the value of art (that is, of the feelings it transmits) depends on men's perception of the meaning of life; depends on what they hold to be the good and the evil of life. And what is good and what is evil is defined by what are termed religions.

Humanity unceasingly moves forward from a lower, more partial and obscure, understanding of life to one more general and more lucid. And in this as in every movement there are leaders—those who have understood the meaning of life more clearly than others—and of these advanced men there is always one who has in his words and by his life expressed this meaning more clearly, lucidly, and strongly than others. This man's expression of the meaning of life, together with those superstitions, traditions, and ceremonies which usually form round the memory of such a man, is what is called a religion. Religions are the exponents of the highest comprehension of life accessible to the best and foremost men at a given time in a given society; a comprehension towards which all the rest of that society must inevitably and irresistibly advance. And therefore religions alone have always served, and still serve, as bases for the

valuation of human sentiments. If feelings bring men nearer the ideal their religion indicates, if they are in harmony with it and do not contradict it, they are good; if they estrange men from it and oppose it they are bad.

If the religion places the meaning of life in worshipping one God and fulfilling what is regarded as His will, as was the case among the Jews, then the feelings flowing from love of that God and of His law, successfully transmitted through the art of poetry by the prophets, by the psalms, or by the epic of the book of Genesis, are good, high art. All opposing that, as for instance the transmission of feelings of devotion to strange gods, or of feelings incompatible with the law of God, would be considered bad art. Or if, as was the case among the Greeks, the religion places the meaning of life in earthly happiness, in beauty and in strength, then art successfully transmitting the joy and energy of life would be considered good art, but art transmitting feelings of effeminacy or despondency would be bad art. If the meaning of life is seen in the well-being of one's nation, or in honouring one's ancestors and continuing the mode of life led by them, as was the case among the Romans and the Chinese respectively, then art transmitting feelings of joy at the sacrifice of one's personal well-being for the common weal, or at the exaltation of one's ancestors and the maintenance of their traditions, would be considered good art; but art expressing feelings contrary to these would be regarded as bad. If the meaning of life is seen in freeing oneself from the yoke of animalism, as is the case among the Buddhists, then art successfully transmitting feelings that elevate the soul and humble the flesh will be good art, and all that transmits feelings strengthening the bodily passions will be bad art.

In every age and in every human society there exists a religious sense, common to that whole society, of what is

good and what is bad, and it is this religious conception that decides the value of the feelings transmitted by art. And therefore among all nations art which transmitted feelings considered to be good by this general religious sense was recognised as being good and was encouraged, but art which transmitted feelings considered to be bad by this general religious sense was recognised as being bad and was rejected. All the rest of the immense field of art by means of which people communicate one with another was not esteemed at all and was only noticed when it ran counter to the religious conception of its age, and then merely to be repudiated. Thus it was among all nations,—Greeks, Jews, Indians, Egyptians, and Chinese,—and so it was when Christianity appeared.

The Christianity of the first centuries recognised as productions of good art only legends, lives of saints, sermons, prayers and hymn-singing, evoking love of Christ, emotion at his life, desire to follow his example, renunciation of worldly life, humility, and the love of others; all productions transmitting feelings of personal enjoyment they considered to be bad and therefore rejected, for instance, tolerating plastic representations only when they were symbolical, they rejected all the pagan sculptures.

This was so among the Christians of the first centuries, who accepted Christ's teaching if not quite in its true form at least not in the perverted, paganised form in which it was accepted subsequently.

But besides this Christianity, from the time of the wholesale conversion of nations by order of the authorities, as in the days of Constantine, Charlemagne, and Vladimir, there appeared another, a Church-Christianity, which was nearer to paganism than to Christ's teaching. And this Church-Christianity, in accordance with its own teaching, estimated

quite otherwise the feelings of people and the productions of art which transmitted those feelings.

This Church-Christianity not only did not acknowledge the fundamental and essential positions of true Christianity,—the immediate relationship of each man to the Father, the consequent brotherhood and equality of all men, and the substitution of humility and love in place of every kind of violence,—but on the contrary having set up a heavenly hierarchy similar to the pagan mythology and having introduced the worship of Christ, of the Virgin, of angels, of apostles, of saints, and of martyrs, and not only of these divinities themselves but also of their images, it made blind faith in the Church and its ordinances the essential point of its teaching.

However foreign this teaching may have been to true Christianity, however degraded not only in comparison with true Christianity but even with the life-conception of Romans such as Julian and others, it was for all that, to the barbarians who accepted it, a higher doctrine than their former adoration of gods, heroes, and good and bad spirits. And therefore this teaching was a religion to them, and on the basis of that religion the art of the time was assessed. And art transmitting pious adoration of the Virgin, Jesus, the saints, and the angels, a blind faith in and submission to the Church, fear of torments and hope of blessedness in a life beyond the grave, was considered good; while all art opposed to this was held to be bad.

The teaching on the basis of which this art arose was a perversion of Christ's teaching, but the art which sprang up on this perverted teaching was nevertheless a true art, because it corresponded to the religious view of life held by the people among whom it arose.

The artists of the Middle Ages, vitalised by the same

source of feeling—religion—as the mass of the people, and transmitting in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, or drama, the feelings and states of mind they experienced, were true artists; and their activity, founded on the highest conceptions accessible to their age and common to the entire people, though for our times a mean art, was nevertheless a true one, shared by the whole community.

And this was the state of things until, in the upper, rich, more educated classes of European society, doubt arose as to the truth of that understanding of life which was expressed by Church-Christianity. When, after the Crusades and the maximum development of papal power and its abuses, people of the rich classes became acquainted with the wisdom of the classics, and saw on the one hand the reasonable lucidity of the teaching of the ancient sages and on the other hand the incompatibility of the Church doctrine with the teaching of Christ, they lost all possibility of continuing to believe the Church teaching.

If in externals they still kept to the forms of Church teaching, they could no longer believe in it, and held to it only by inertia and for the sake of influencing the masses, who continued to believe blindly in Church doctrine, and whom the upper classes for their own advantage considered it necessary to encourage in those beliefs.

So that a time came when Church-Christianity ceased to be the general religious doctrine of all Christian people: some—the masses—continued blindly to believe in it, but the upper classes—those in whose hands lay the power and wealth and therefore the leisure to produce art and the means to stimulate it—ceased to believe that teaching.

In regard to religion the upper circles of the Middle Ages found themselves in the position the educated Romans were in before Christianity arose, that is, they no longer believed in the religion of the masses, but had no beliefs to put in

place of the worn-out Church doctrine, which for them had lost its meaning.

There was only this difference, that whereas for the Romans who lost faith in their emperor-gods and household-gods it was impossible to extract anything further from all the complex mythology they had borrowed from all the conquered nations, and it was consequently necessary to find a completely new conception of life, the people of the Middle Ages when they doubted the truth of the Church teaching had no need to seek a fresh one. That Christian teaching which they professed in a perverted form as Church doctrine, had mapped out the path of human progress so far ahead that they had only to rid themselves of those perversions which hid the teaching announced by Christ, and to adopt its real meaning—if not completely then at least in some greater degree than that in which the Church had held it. And this was partially done not only in the reformations of Wyclif, Huss, Luther, and Calvin, but by all that current of non-Church Christianity, represented in earlier times by the Paulicians and the Bogomilites,[1] and afterwards by the Waldenses and the other non-Church Christians who were called heretics. But this could be, and was, done chiefly by poor people—who did not rule. A few of the rich and strong, as Francis of Assisi and others, accepted the Christian teaching in its full significance even though it undermined their privileged positions. But most people of the upper classes (though in the depth of their souls they had lost faith in the Church teaching) could not or would not act thus, because the essence of that Christian view of life which stood ready to be adopted when once they rejected the Church faith, was a teaching of the brotherhood (and therefore the equality) of man, and this negatived those privileges on which

[1] Eastern sects well known in early Church history, who rejected the Church's rendering of Christ's teaching and were cruelly persecuted.—A. M.

they lived, in which they had grown up and been educated, and to which they were accustomed. Not in the depth of their hearts believing in the Church teaching,—which had outlived its age and had no longer any true meaning for them,—and not being strong enough to accept true Christianity, men of these rich, governing classes—popes, kings, dukes, and all the great ones of the earth—were left without any religion, with but the external forms of one, which they supported as being profitable and even necessary for themselves, since these forms supported a teaching which justified the privileges they made use of. In reality these people believed in nothing, just as the Romans of the first centuries of our era believed in nothing. But at the same time these were the people who had the power and the wealth, and these were the people who rewarded art and directed it.

And, let it be noticed, it was just among these people that there grew up an art esteemed, not according to its success in expressing men's religious feelings but in proportion to its beauty,—in other words, according to the enjoyment it gave.

No longer able to believe in the Church religion, whose falsehood they had detected, and incapable of accepting true Christian teaching which denounced their whole manner of life, these rich and powerful people, stranded without any religious conception of life, involuntarily returned to that pagan view of things which places life's meaning in personal enjoyment. And then took place among the upper classes what is called the Renaissance of science and art, which was really not only a denial of every religion, but also an assertion that religion is unnecessary.

The Church doctrine is so coherent a system that it cannot be altered or corrected without destroying it altogether. As soon as doubt arose with regard to the infallibility of the Pope (and this doubt was then in the minds of all educated people), doubt inevitably followed as to the truth of tradition.

But doubt as to the truth of tradition is fatal not only to popery and Catholicism, but also to the whole Church creed with all its dogmas: the divinity of Christ, the resurrection, and the Trinity; and it destroys the authority of the Scriptures, since they were considered to be inspired only because the tradition of the Church decided it so.

So that the majority of the highest classes of that age, even the popes and the ecclesiastics, really believed in nothing at all. In the Church doctrine these people did not believe, for they saw its insolvency; but neither could they follow Francis of Assisi, Peter of Chelczic,[1] and most of the heretics, in acknowledging the moral, social teaching of Christ, for that teaching undermined their social position. So these people remained without any religious view of life. And having none they could have no standard wherewith to estimate what was good and what was bad art, but that of personal enjoyment. And having acknowledged their criterion of what was good to be pleasure, that is beauty, these people of the upper classes of European society went back in their comprehension of art to the gross conception of the primitive Greeks, which Plato had already condemned. And conformably to this understanding of life a theory of art was formulated.

[1] Peter of Chelczic, a Bohemian, was one of the successors of John Huss. In 1457 he was leader of the non-resistants called the United Brethren. He was the author of a remarkable book, *The Net of Faith,* directed against Church and State. It is mentioned in Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You.* —A. M.

CHAPTER VII

An esthetic theory framed to suit the view of life of the ruling classes.

From the time that people of the upper classes lost faith in Church-Christianity, beauty (that is to say, the pleasure received from art) became their standard of good and bad art. And in accordance with that view, an esthetic theory naturally sprang up among those upper classes, justifying such a conception—a theory according to which the aim of art is to exhibit beauty. The partisans of this esthetic theory in confirmation of its truth affirmed that it was no invention of their own, but that it existed in the nature of things and was recognised even by the ancient Greeks. But this assertion was quite arbitrary and had no foundation other than the fact that among the ancient Greeks, in consequence of the low level of their moral ideal (as compared with the Christian), their conception of the good, τὸ ἀγαθόν, was not yet sharply divided from their conception of the beautiful, τὸ καλόν.

That highest perfection of goodness (not only not identical with beauty but for the most part contrasting with it) which was discerned by the Jews even in the times of Isaiah and fully expressed by Christianity, was quite unknown to the Greeks. They supposed that the beautiful must necessarily also be the good. It is true that their foremost thinkers—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle—felt that goodness may happen not to coincide with beauty. Socrates expressly subordinated beauty to goodness; Plato, to unite the two conceptions, spoke of spiritual beauty; while Aristotle demanded from art that it should have a moral influence on people (κάθαρσις).

But notwithstanding all this, they could not quite dismiss the notion that beauty and goodness coincide.

Consequently, in the language of that period, a compound word (*καλοκἀγαθία*, beauty-goodness) came into use to express that notion.

Evidently the Greek sages began to draw near to that perception of goodness which is expressed in Buddhism and in Christianity, but got entangled in defining the relation between goodness and beauty. Plato's reasoning about beauty and goodness is full of contradictions. And it was just this confusion of ideas that those Europeans of a later age, who had lost all faith, tried to elevate into a law. They tried to prove that this union of beauty and goodness is inherent in the very essence of things; that beauty and goodness must coincide; and that the word and conception *καλοκἀγαθία* (which had a meaning for Greeks but has none at all for Christians) represents the highest ideal of humanity. On this misunderstanding the new science of esthetics was built up: and to justify its existence the teachings of the ancients on art were twisted so that it should appear that this invented science of esthetics had existed among the Greeks.

In reality the reasoning of the ancients on art was quite unlike ours. As Benard, in his book on the esthetics of Aristotle, quite justly remarks: *Pour qui veut y regarder de près, la théorie du beau et celle de l'art sont tout à fait séparées dans Aristote, comme elles le sont dans Platon et chez tous leurs successeurs* (*L'esthétique d'Aristote et de ses successeurs*, Paris, 1889, p. 28).[1] And, indeed, the reasoning of the ancients on art not only does not confirm our science of esthetics, but rather contradicts its doctrine of beauty. But nevertheless all the esthetic guides, from Schasler to Knight, declare that the science of the beautiful

[1] Anyone examining closely may see that the theory of beauty and that of art are quite separated in Aristotle as they are in Plato and in all their successors.

—esthetic science—was begun by the ancients, by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; and was continued, they say, to some extent by the Epicureans and Stoics, by Seneca and Plutarch, down to Plotinus. But it is supposed that this science, by some unfortunate accident, suddenly vanished in the fourth century and stayed away for about 1500 years, and only after these 1500 years had passed did it revive in Germany, A. D. 1750, in Baumgarten's doctrine.

After Plotinus, says Schasler, fifteen centuries passed away during which there was not the slightest scientific interest shewn for the world of beauty and art. These one and a half thousand years, says he, have been lost to esthetics and have contributed nothing towards the erection of the learned edifice of this science.[1]

In reality nothing of the kind happened. The science of esthetics, the science of the beautiful, neither did nor could vanish, because it never existed. Simply the Greeks (just like everybody else, always and everywhere) considered art (like everything else) good only when it served goodness (as they understood goodness), and bad when it was in opposition to that goodness. And the Greeks themselves were so little developed morally that goodness and beauty

[1] Die Lücke von fünf Jahrhunderten welche zwischen den Kunst-philosophischen Betrachtungen des Plato und Aristoteles und die des Plotins fällt, kann zwar auffällig erscheinen; dennoch kann man eigentlich nicht sagen, dass in dieser Zwischenziet überhaupt von ästhetischen Dingen nicht die Rede gewesen; oder dass gar ein völliger Mangel an Zusammenhang zwischen den Kunsc-anschauungen des letztgenamten Philosophen und denen dei ersteren existire. Freilich wurde die von Aristotle begründete Wissenschaft in Nichts dadurch gefördert! immerhin aber zeigt sich in jener Zwischenzeit noch ein gewisses Interesse für ästhetische Fragen. Nach Plotin aber, die wenigen, ihm in der Ziet nahestehenden Philosophen, wie Longin, Augustin, u. s. f. kommen, wie wir gesehen, kaum in Betracht und schliessen sich übrigens in ihrer Anschauungsweise an ihn an,—vergehen nicht fünf, sondern *fünfzehen Jahrhunderte*, in denen von irgend einer wissenschaftlichen Interesse für die Welt des Schönen und der Kunst nichts zu spüren ist.

Diese anderthalbtausend Jahre, innerhalb deren der Weltgeist durch die mannigfachsten Kämpfe hindurch zu einer völlig neuen Gestaltung des Lebens sich durcharbeitete, sind für die Aesthetik, hinsichtlich des weiteren Ausbaus dieser

seemed to them to coincide. On that obsolete Greek view of life was erected the science of esthetics, invented by men of the eighteenth century, and especially shaped and mounted in Baumgarten's theory. The Greeks (as anyone may see who will read Benard's admirable book on Aristotle and his successors, and Walter's work on Plato) never had a science of esthetics.

Esthetic theories arose about one hundred and fifty years ago among the wealthy classes of the Christian European world, and arose simultaneously among different nations,—German, Italian, Dutch, French, and English. The founder and organiser of it, who gave it a scientific and theoretic form, was Baumgarten.

With a characteristically German external exactitude, pedantry, and symmetry, he devised and expounded this extraordinary theory. And notwithstanding its obvious lack of substance, no one else's theory so pleased the cultured crowd or was accepted so readily and with such an absence of criticism. It so suited the people of the upper classes that to this day, notwithstanding its entirely fantastic charac-

Wissenschaft verloren.—Kritische Geschichte der Aesthetik, von Max Schasler. Berlin, 1872, p. 253, § 25.

The gap of five hundred years, which occurred between the artistic-philosophic observations of Plato and Aristotle and those of Plotinus, may indeed appear striking, but one cannot exactly say that in this interval of time there was absolutely no mention of esthetic matters; or even that a complete lack of correspondence exists between the art-views of the last-named philosopher and that of the former. It is true that the science founded by Aristotle was not in any way advanced thereby; but, for all that, during this interval a certain interest in esthetic questions still appears. But after Plotinus (the few philosophers near him in time, such as Longinus, Augustinus and so forth, hardly come into question as we have seen, and moreover they adhere to him in their views) there passed not five, but *fifteen* centuries in which there is no indication of any sort of scientific interest for the world of the beautiful and of art.

These one-and-a-half-thousand years, within which the world-spirit worked out a completely new foundation of life, are lost for esthetics as regards any further construction of this science.

ter and the arbitrary nature of its assertions, it is repeated by learned and unlearned as though it were something indubitable and self-evident.

Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli,[1] and so, or even more so, theories *habent sua fata* according to the condition of error in which that society lives among whom and for whom the theories are invented. If a theory justifies the false position in which a certain part of a society is living, then however unfounded or even obviously false the theory may be, it is accepted and becomes an article of faith to that section of society. Such, for instance, was the celebrated and unfounded theory expounded by Malthus, of the tendency of the population of the world to increase in geometrical progression but of the means of subsistence to increase only in arithmetical progression, and of the consequent overpopulation of the world; such also was the theory (an outgrowth of the Malthusian) of selection and struggle for existence as the basis of human progress. Such again is Marx's theory, which regards the gradual destruction of small private production by large capitalistic production, now going on around us, as an inevitable decree of fate. However unfounded such theories are, however contrary to all that is known and confessed by humanity, and however obviously immoral they may be, they are credulously accepted, pass uncriticised, and are preached, perhaps for centuries, until the conditions are destroyed which they served to justify, or until their absurdity has become too evident. To this class belongs this astonishing theory of the Baumgartenian Trinity: Goodness, Beauty, and Truth, according to which it appears that the very best that can be done by the art of nations after 1900 years of Christian teaching is to choose as the ideal of their life the ideal that was held by a small, semi-savage, slave-holding people who lived 2000 years ago,

[1] The fate of books depends on the head of the reader.

who imitated the nude human body extremely well and erected buildings pleasant to look at. All these incompatibilities pass completely unnoticed. Learned people write long, cloudy treatises on beauty as a member of the esthetic trinity of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness; *das Schöne, das Wahre, das Gute; le Beau, le Vrai, le Bon,* are repeated with capital letters by philosophers, estheticians, and artists, by private individuals, by novelists and by *feuilletonistes*; and they all think when pronouncing these sacrosanct words that they speak of something quite definite and solid—something on which they can base their opinions. In reality these words not only have no definite meaning, but they hinder us in attaching any definite meaning to existing art; they are wanted only for the purpose of justifying the false importance we attribute to an art that transmits every kind of feeling if only those feelings afford us pleasure.[1]

[1] *What is Art?* was translated by me from Tolstoy's MSS., which he sent me chapter by chapter as he wrote it. He revised his work to such an extent that some chapters were re-written three times over after he first sent them to me for translation. The following passages belonging to an early version of this chapter, though he did not retain them in his final revision, seem worth preserving, so I give them here in a foot-note:

We only need escape for a moment from the habit of considering this trinity of Goodness, Beauty and Truth, presented to us by Baumgarten, to be as true as the Trinity of religion, and need only ask ourselves what we all have always understood by the words which make up this triad, in order to be convinced of the utterly fantastic nature of the union into one, of three absolutely different words and conceptions which are not even commensurable in meaning.

Goodness, Beauty, and Truth are put on one level, and all three conceptions are treated as though they were fundamental and metaphysical. Whereas in reality such is not at all the case.

Goodness is the eternal, the highest, aim of our life. However we may understand goodness, our life is nothing but a striving towards the good, that is, towards God.

Goodness is really the fundamental metaphysical perception which forms the essence of our consciousness: a perception not defined by reason.

Goodness is that which cannot be defined by anything else, but which defines everything else.

But Beauty—if we do not want mere words but speak about what we understand—beauty is nothing but what pleases us. The notion of beauty not only does not coincide with goodness, but rather is contrary to it; for the good most

often coincides with victory over the passions, while beauty is at the root of all our passions.

The more utterly we surrender ourselves to beauty the farther we depart from goodness. I know that to this people always reply that there is a moral and spiritual beauty, but this is merely playing with words, for by spiritual and moral beauty nothing else is understood but goodness. For the most part, beauty of soul, or goodness not only does not coincide with what is ordinarily understood as beauty, but is contrary to it.

As to truth—still less can we attribute to this member of the trinity identity with goodness, or even any independent existence at all.

By truth we merely mean the correspondence of an expression, or of the definition of an object, with reality, or with an understanding of the object common to everyone, and therefore it is a means of arriving at the good. But what is there in common between the conceptions of beauty and truth on the one hand, and of goodness on the other? Truth spoken expressly to cause annoyance certainly does not harmonise with goodness.

Not only are beauty and truth not conceptions equivalent to goodness, and not only do they not form one entity with goodness, but they do not even coincide with it. For instance, Socrates and Pascal as well as many others, considered that learning the truth about unnecessary things does not accord with goodness. With beauty, truth has not even anything in common, but for the most part is in contradiction with it, for truth generally exposes the deception and destroys the illusion which is a chief condition of beauty.

And lo and behold! the arbitrary conjunction into one, of these three conceptions which are not commensurable but foreign to one another, has served as the basis for that amazing theory according to which the difference between good art, transmitting good feeling, and bad art, transmitting bad feeling, is completely obliterated, and one of the lowest manifestations of art, art merely for enjoyment—that art against which all the teachers of humanity have warned mankind—has come to be considered the highest art.

CHAPTER VIII

Who have adopted this esthetic theory? Real art needful for all men. Our art too expensive, too unintelligible, and too harmful, for the masses. The theory of "the elect" in art.

But if art is a human activity having for its purpose the transmission to others of the highest and best feelings to which men have risen, how could it be that humanity for a certain rather considerable period of its existence (from the time people ceased to believe in Church doctrine down to the present day) should exist without this important activity, and instead of it should put up with an insignificant artistic activity only affording pleasure?

To answer this question it is necessary first of all to correct the current error people make in attributing to our art the significance of true, universal art. We are so accustomed not only naïvely to consider the Circassian family the best stock of people, but also the Anglo-Saxon race the best race if we are Englishmen or Americans, or the Teutonic if we are Germans, or the Gallo-Latin if we are French, or the Slavonic if we are Russians, that when speaking of our own art we feel fully convinced not only that our art is true art, but even that it is the best and only true art. But in reality our art is not only not the only art (as the Bible was once held to be the only book),—it is not even the art of the whole of Christendom, only of a small section of our part of humanity. It was correct to speak of a national Jewish, Greek, or Egyptian art, and one may speak of a now-existing Chinese, Japanese, or Indian art, shared in by a whole people. Such art common to a whole nation existed in Russia till

Peter the First's time, and existed in the rest of Europe until the thirteenth or fourteenth century; but since the upper classes of European society, having lost faith in the Church teaching, did not accept real Christianity but remained without any faith, one can no longer speak of an art of the Christian nations in the sense of the whole of art. Since the upper classes of the Christian nations lost faith in Church-Christianity the art of those upper classes has separated itself from the art of the rest of the people and there have been two arts—the art of the people, and genteel art. And therefore the answer to the question how it could happen that humanity lived for a certain period without real art, replacing it by art which served enjoyment only, is that not the whole of humanity, nor even any considerable portion of it, lived without real art, but only the highest classes of European Christian society, and even they only for a comparatively short time—from the commencement of the Renaissance down to our own day.

The consequence of this absence of true art showed itself inevitably in the corruption of that class which nourished itself on the false art. All the confused unintelligible theories of art, all the false and contradictory judgments on art, and particularly the self-confident stagnation of our art in its false channels—all arise, from the assertion, which has come into common use and is accepted as an unquestioned truth but is yet amazingly and palpably false, the assertion namely that the art of our upper classes [1] is the whole of art: the true, the only, the universal art. And although this assertion (which is precisely similar to the assertion made by religious people of the various Churches, who consider that theirs is the only true religion) is quite arbitrary and

[1] The contrast made is between the classes and the masses: between those who do not and those who do earn their bread by productive manual labour; the middle classes being taken as an offshoot of the upper classes.—A. M.

obviously unjust, yet it is calmly repeated by all the people of our circle with full faith in its infallibility.

The art we have is the whole of art, the real, the only art, and yet two-thirds of the human race (all the peoples of Asia and Africa) live and die knowing nothing of this sole and supreme art. And even in our Christian society hardly one per cent. of the people make use of this art which we speak of as being the *whole* of art; the remaining ninety-nine per cent. live and die, generation after generation, crushed by toil and never tasting this art, which moreover is of such a nature that if they could get it they would not understand anything of it. We, according to the current esthetic theory, acknowledge art either as one of the highest manifestations of the Idea, God, Beauty, or as the highest spiritual enjoyment; furthermore we hold that all people have equal rights, if not to material at any rate to spiritual well-being; and yet ninety-nine per cent. of our European population live and die, generation after generation, crushed by toil, much of which toil is necessary for the production of our art which they never use, and we in face of this, calmly assert that the art which we produce is the real, true, only art—all of art!

To the remark that if our art is the true art everyone should have the benfit of it, the usual reply is that if everybody at present does not make use of existing art, the fault lies not in the art but in the false organisation of society; that one can imagine to oneself in the future a state of things in which physical labour will be partly superseded by machinery, partly lightened by its just distribution, and that labour for the production of art will be taken in turns: that there is no need for some people always to sit below the stage moving the decorations, winding up the machinery, working at the piano or French horn, and setting type and printing books, but that the people who do all this work

might be engaged only a few hours per day and in their leisure time might enjoy all the blessings of art.

That is what the defenders of our exclusive art say. But I think they do not themselves believe it. They cannot help knowing that fine art can arise only on the slavery of the masses of the people, and can continue only as long as that slavery lasts, and they cannot help knowing that only under conditions of intense hardship for the workers can specialists —writers, musicians, dancers, and actors—arrive at that fine degree of perfection to which they do attain, or produce their refined works of art, and that only under the same conditions can there be a fine public to appreciate such productions. Free the slaves of capital, and it will be impossible to produce such refined art.

But even were we to admit the inadmissible, and say that means may be found by which art (that art which is considered to be art among us) may be made accessible to the whole people, another consideration presents itself showing that fashionable art cannot be the whole of art, namely the fact that it is completely unintelligible to the people. Formerly men wrote poems in Latin, but now their artistic productions are as unintelligible to the common folk as if they were written in Sanskrit. The usual reply to this is, that if the people do not now understand this art of ours it only proves that they are undeveloped, and that this has been so at each fresh step forward made by art. It has never been understood at first, but afterwards people have become accustomed to it.

It will be the same with our present art; it will be understood when everybody is as well educated as are we—the people of the upper classes—who produce it, say the defenders of our art. But this assertion is evidently even more untrue than the former, for we know that the majority of the productions of the art of the upper classes, such as various odes,

poems, dramas, cantatas, pastorals, pictures, and so forth, which delighted people of the upper classes when they were produced, never were afterwards either understood or valued by the great masses of mankind, but have remained, what they were at first, a mere pastime for the rich people of their time, for whom alone they ever were of any importance. It is also often urged in proof of the assertion that the people will some day understand our art, that some productions of so-called classical poetry, music, or painting which formerly did not please the masses, do—now that they have been offered to them from all sides—begin to please these same masses; but this only shows that the crowd, especially the half-spoilt town crowd, can easily (its taste having been perverted) be accustomed to any sort of art. Moreover this art is not produced by these masses, nor even chosen by them, but is energetically thrust upon them in those public places in which art is accessible to the people. For the great majority of working people our art, besides being inaccessible on account of its costliness, is strange in its very nature, transmitting as it does the feelings of people far removed from those conditions of laborious life which are natural to the great body of humanity. That which is enjoyment to a man of the rich classes is incomprehensible, as a pleasure, to a working man, and evokes in him either no feeling at all or a feeling quite contrary to that which it evokes in an idle and satiated man. Such feelings as form the chief subjects of present-day art—say, for instance, honour,[1] patriotism, and amorousness—evoke in a working man only bewilderment and contempt, or indignation. So that even if a possibility were given to the labouring classes to see, to read, and to hear, in their leisure time, all that forms the flower of contemporary art (as is done to some extent in

[1] Duelling was still customary among the higher circles in Russia, as in other Continental countries when this was written.—A. M.

towns, by means of picture-galleries, popular concerts, and libraries), the working man (to the extent to which he is a labourer and has not begun to pass into the ranks of those perverted by idleness) would be able to make nothing of our fine art, and if he did understand it, what he understood would not elevate his soul, but would certainly in most cases pervert it. To thoughtful and sincere people there can therefore be no doubt that the art of our upper classes never can be the art of the whole people. But if art is an important matter, a spiritual blessing essential for all men (like religion, as the devotees of art are found of saying), then it should be accessible to everyone. And if, as in our day, it is not accessible to all men, then one of two things: either art is not the vital matter it is represented to be, or that art which we call art is not the real thing.

The dilemma is inevitable, and therefore clever and immoral people avoid it by denying one side of it, namely, denying that the common people have a right to art. These people simply and boldly speak out and say (what goes to the heart of the matter) that the participators in and utilisers of what in their esteem is highly beautiful art, that is, art furnishing the greatest enjoyment, can only be *schöne Geister,* the elect, as the romanticists called them, the *Uebermenschen,* as they are called by the followers of Nietzsche; the vulgar herd which remains, incapable of experiencing these pleasures, must serve the exalted pleasures of this superior breed of people. The people who express these views at least do not pretend, and do not try to combine the incombinable, but frankly admit what is the case, that our art is an art of the upper classes only. So in reality art has been, and is, understood by everyone engaged on it in our society.

CHAPTER IX

The perversion of our art. It has lost its natural subject-matter, Has no flow of fresh feeling. Transmits chiefly three base emotions.

The unbelief of the upper classes of the European world had this effect, that instead of an artistic activity aiming at transmitting the highest feelings to which humanity has attained,—those flowing from religious perception,—we have an activity which aims at affording the greatest enjoyment to a certain class of society. And of all the immense domain of art that part has been fenced off, and is alone called art, which affords enjoyment to the people of this particular circle.

Apart from the moral effects on European society of such a selection, out of the whole sphere of art, of what did not deserve such a valuation, and the acknowledgment of it as important, this perversion of art has weakened art itself and well-nigh destroyed it. The first great result was that art was deprived of the infinite, varied, and profound religious subject-matter proper to it. The second result was that, having only a small circle of people in view, it lost its beauty of form and became affected and obscure; and the third and chief result was that it ceased to be natural or even sincere, and became thoroughly artificial and brain-spun.

The first result—the impoverishment of subject-matter—followed because only that is a true work of art which transmits fresh feelings not before experienced by man. As thought-product is only then real thought-product when it transmits new conceptions and thoughts and does not merely repeat what was known before, so also an art-product is only

then a genuine art-product when it brings a new feeling (however insignificant) into the current of human life. This explains why children and youths are so strongly impressed by those works of art which first transmit to them feelings they had not before experienced.

The same powerful impression is made on people by feelings which are quite new and have never before been expressed by man. And it is the source from which such feelings flow that the art of the upper classes has deprived itself of by estimating feelings, not in conformity with religious perception but according to the degree of enjoyment they afford. There is nothing older and more hackneyed than enjoyment, and there is nothing fresher than the feelings springing from the religious consciousness of each age. It could not be otherwise: man's enjoyment has limits established by his nature, but the movement forward of humanity, which expresses itself in religious consciousness, has no limits. At every forward step taken by humanity—and such steps are taken in consequence of the greater and greater elucidation of religious perception—men experience new and fresh feelings. And therefore only on the basis of religious perception (which shows the highest level of life-comprehension reached by the men of a certain period) can fresh emotion, never before felt by man, arise. From the religious perception of the ancient Greeks flowed the really new, important, and endlessly varied feelings expressed by Homer and the tragic writers. It was the same among the Jews, who attained the religious conception of a single God,—from that perception flowed all those new and important emotions expressed by the prophets. It was the same for the poets of the Middle Ages, who, if they believed in a heavenly hierarchy, believed also in the Catholic commune; and it is the same for a man of to-day who has grasped the religious conception of true Christianity—the brotherhood of man.

The variety of fresh feelings flowing from religious perception is endless, and they are all new, for religious perception is nothing else than the first indication of that which is coming into existence, namely, a new relation of man to the world around him. But the feelings flowing from the desire for enjoyment are on the contrary not only limited, but were long ago experienced and expressed. And therefore the lack of belief of the upper classes of Europe has left them with an art fed on the poorest subject-matter.

The impoverishment of the subject-matter of upper-class art was further increased by the fact that, ceasing to be religious, it ceased also to be popular, and this again diminished the range of feelings which it transmitted. For the range of feelings experienced by the powerful and the rich, who have no experience of labour for the support of life, is far poorer, more limited, and more insignificant, than the range of feelings natural to working people.

People of our circle, estheticians, usually think and say just the contrary of this. I remember how Goncharev the author, a very clever and educated man but a thorough townsman and an esthetician, said to me that after Turgenev's *Sportsman's Notebook* there was nothing left to write about in peasant life. It was all used up. The life of working people seemed to him so simple that Turgenev's peasant stories had used up all there was to describe. The life of our wealthy people, with their love affairs and dissatisfaction with themselves, seemed to him full of inexhaustible subject-matter. One hero kissed his lady on the palm of her hand, another on her elbow, and a third somewhere else. One man is discontented through idleness, and another because people don't love him. And Goncharev thought that in this sphere there is no end of variety. And this opinion—that the life of working people is poor in subject-matter, but that our life, the life of the idle, is full of interest—is shared by

very many people in our society. The life of a labouring man, with its endlessly varied forms of labour and the dangers connected with labour on sea and underground; his migrations, his intercourse with his employers, overseers, and companions, and with men of other religions and other nationalities: his struggles with nature and with wild beasts, his association with domestic animals, his work in the forest, on the steppe, in the field, the garden, the orchard: his intercourse with wife and children, not only as with people near and dear to him but as with co-workers and helpers in labour, replacing him in time of need: his concern in all economic questions, not as matters of display or discussion but as problems of life for himself and his family: his pride in self-suppression and service of others, his pleasures of refreshment; and the permeation of all these interests by a religious re-action towards the facts: all this to us, who have not these interests and possess no religious perception, seems monotonous in comparison with those small enjoyments and insignificant cares of our life,—a life, not of labour nor of production, but of consumption and destruction of that which others have produced for us. We think the feelings experienced by people of our day and our class are very important and varied; but in reality almost all the feelings of people of our class amount to but three very insignificant and simple feelings—the feeling of pride, the feeling of sexual desire, and the feeling of weariness of life. These three feelings, with their off-shoots, form almost the only subject-matter of the art of the rich classes.

At first, at the very beginning of the separation of the exclusive art of the upper classes from universal art, its chief subject-matter was the feeling of pride. It was so at the time of the Renaissance and after it, when the chief subject of works of art was the laudation of the strong—popes, kings, and dukes. Odes and madrigals were written in their honour,

they were extolled in cantatas and hymns, and their portraits were painted, and their statues carved, in various adulatory ways.

Next, the element of sexual desire began more and more to enter into art, and (with very few exceptions, and in novels and dramas almost without exception) it has now become an essential feature of every art product of the wealthy classes.

The third feeling transmitted by the art of the rich—that of discontent with life—appeared yet later in modern art. This feeling, which at the commencement of the present century was expressed only by exceptional men: by Byron, by Leopardi, and afterwards by Heine, has latterly become fashionable and is expressed by most ordinary and empty people. Most justly does the French critic Doumic characterise the works of the new writers: . . . *c'est la lassitude de vivre le mépris de l'époque présente, le regret d'un autre temps aperçu à travers l'illusion de l'art, le gout du paradoxe, le besoin de se singulariser, une aspiration de raffinés vers la simplicité, l'adoration enfantine du merveilleux, la séduction maladive de la rêverie, l'èbranlement des nerfs,—surtout l'appel exaspéré de la sensualité* (*Les Jeunes,* René Doumic).[1] And, as a matter of fact, of these three feelings it is sensuality, the lowest (accessible not only to all men but even to all animals), which forms the chief subject-matter of works of art of recent times.

From Boccaccio to Marcel Prévost, all novels, poems, and verses invariably transmit the feeling of sexual love in its different forms. Adultery is not only the favourite, but almost the only theme of all the novels. A performance is

[1] . . . it is weariness of life, contempt for the present epoch, regret for another age seen through the illusion of art, a taste for paradox, a desire to be singular, a sentimental aspiration towards simplicity, an infantile adoration of the marvellous, a sickly tendency towards reverie, a shattered condition of nerves, —and, above all, the exasperated demand of sensuality.

not a performance unless, under some pretext, women appear with naked busts and limbs. Songs and romances—all are expressions of lust idealised in various degrees.

A majority of the pictures by French artists represent female nakedness in various forms. In recent French literature there is hardly a page or a poem in which nakedness is not described, and in which, relevantly or irrelevantly, their favourite thought and word *nu* is not repeated a couple of times. There is a certain writer, Rémy de Gourment, who gets printed and is considered talented. To obtain an idea of the new writers, I read his novel, *Les Chevaux de Diomède.* It is a consecutive and detailed account of the sexual connections some gentleman had with various women. Every page contains lust-kindling descriptions. It is the same in Pierre Louÿs' book, *Aphrodite,* which met with success; it is the same in a book I lately chanced upon, Huysmans' *Certains,* and with but few exceptions it is the same in all French novels. They are all the productions of people suffering from erotic mania. And these people are evidently convinced that as their whole life, in consequence of their diseased condition, is concentrated on amplifying various sexual abominations, therefore the life of all the world is similarly concentrated. And these people, suffering from erotic mania, are imitated throughout the whole artistic world of Europe and America.

Thus, in consequence of the lack of belief and the exceptional manner of life of the wealthy classes, the art of these classes became impoverished in its subject-matter and has sunk to the transmission of the feelings of pride, discontent with life, and above all of sexual desire.

CHAPTER X

Loss of comprehensibility. Decadent art. Recent French art. Have we a right to say it is bad? The highest art has always been comprehensible to normal people. What fails to infect normal people is not art.

In consequence of their unbelief, the art of the upper classes became poor in subject-matter. But besides that, becoming continually more and more exclusive it became at the same time continually more and more involved affected and obscure.

When a universal artist (such as were some of the Greek artists or the Jewish prophets) composed his work he naturally strove to say what he had to say in such a way that his production should be intelligible to all men. But when an artist composed for a small circle of people placed in exceptional conditions, or even for a single individual and his courtiers—for popes, cardinals, kings, dukes, queens, or for a king's mistress—he naturally only aimed at influencing these people, who were well known to him and lived in exceptional conditions familiar to him. And this was an easier task, and the artist was involuntarily drawn to express himself by allusions comprehensible only to the initiated and obscure to everyone else. In the first place, more could be said in this way; and secondly, there is (for the initiated) even a certain charm in the cloudiness of such a manner of expression. This method, which showed itself both in euphuism and in mythological and historical allusions, came more and more into use, until it apparently at last reached its utmost limits in the so-called art of the Decadents. It has come, finally, to this: that not only are haziness, mysteriousness, obscurity, and exclusiveness (shutting out the

masses) elevated to the rank of a merit and a condition of poetic art, but even incorrectness, indefiniteness, and lack of eloquence, are held in esteem.

Théophile Gautier, in his preface to the celebrated *Fleurs du Mal,* says that Baudelaire as far as possible banished from poetry eloquence, passion, and truth too strictly copied (*"l'éloquence, la passion, et la vérité calquée trop exactement"*).

And Baudelaire not only did this, but maintained this thesis in his verses, and yet more strikingly in the prose of his *Petits Poèmes en Prose,* the meanings of which have to be guessed like a rebus and remain for the most part undiscovered.

The poet Verlaine (who followed next after Baudelaire, and was also esteemed great) even wrote an *Art poétique,* in which he advises this style of composition:—

De la musique avant toute chose,
Et pour cela préfère l'Impair
Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air,
Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose.

Il faut aussi que tu n'ailles point
Choisir tes mots sans quelque méprise:
Rien de plus cher que la chanson grise
Ou l'Indécis au Précis se joint.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

And again:—

De la musique encore et toujours!
Que ton vers soit la chose envolée
Qu'on sent qui fuit d'une âme en allée
Vers d'autres cieux à d'autres amours.

Que ton vers soit la bonne aventure
Éparse au vent crispé du matin,

Qui va fleurant la menthe et le thym . . .
Et tout le reste est littérature.[1]

After these two comes Mallarmé, considered the most important of the young poets, and he plainly says that the charm of poetry lies in our having to guess its meaning—that in poetry there should always be a puzzle:—

Je pense qu'il faut qu'il n'y ait qu'allusion, says he. *La contemplation des objets, l'image s'envolant des rêveries suscitées par eux, sont le chant: les Parnassiens, eux, prennent la chose entièrement et la montrent; par là ils manquent de mystère; ils retirent aux esprits cette joie délicieuse de croire qu'ils créent.* Nommer un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème, qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu: le suggérer, voilà le rêve. *C'est le parfait usage de ce mystère qui constitue le symbole: évoquer petit à petit un objet pour montrer un état d'âme, ou, inversement, choisir un objet et*

[1] Music, music before all things!
The eccentric still prefer,
Vague in air, and nothing weighty,
Soluble. Yet do not err,

Choosing words; still do it lightly,
Do it with contemptuous mind:
Dearest are grey songs where mingle
The Defined and Undefined!
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Music always, now and ever!
Be thy verse the thing that flies
From a soul that's gone, escaping,
Gone to other loves and skies.

Gone to other loves and regions,
Following fortunes that allure,
Mint and thyme and morning crispness . . .
All the rest's mere literature.

en dégager un état d'âme, par une sèrie de déchiffrements. . . . Si un être d'une intelligence moyenne, et d'une préparation littéraire insuffisante, ouvre par hasard un livre ainsi fait et prétend en jouir, il y a malentendu, il faut remettre les choses à leur place. Il doit y avoir toujours énigme en poèsie, *et c'est le but de la littérature, il n'y en a pas d'autre,—d'évoquer les objets.—Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire,* Jules Huret, pp. 60, 61.[1]

Thus is obscurity elevated into a dogma among the new poets. As the French critic Doumic (who has not yet accepted the dogma) quite correctly says:—

Il serait temps aussi d'en finir avec cette fameuse "théorie de l'obscurité" que la nouvelle école a élevée, en effet à la hauteur d'un dogme.—Les Jeunes, études et portraits, René Doumic.[2]

But it is not only French writers who think thus. The poets of all other countries think and act in the same way: German, and Scandinavian, and Italian, and Russian, and English. So also do the artists of the new period in all branches of art: in painting, in sculpture, and in music. Relying on Nietzsche and Wagner, the artists of the new age conclude that it is unnecessary for them to be intelli-

[1] I think there should be nothing but allusions. The contemplation of objects, the flying image of reveries evoked by them, make the song. The Parnassians state the thing completely, and show it, and thereby lack mystery; they deprive the mind of that delicious joy of imagining that it creates. To *name an object is to take away three-fourths of the enjoyment of the poem, which consists in the happiness of guessing little by little: to suggest it, that is the dream.* It is the perfect use of this mystery that constitutes the symbol: little by little to evoke an object in order to show a state of the soul; or inversely, to choose an object, and from it to disengage a state of the soul by a series of decipherings.

. . . If a being of mediocre intelligence and insufficient literary preparation chances to open a book made in this way and pretends to enjoy it, there is a misunderstanding—things must be returned to their places. *There should always be an enigma in poetry,* and the aim of literature—it has no other—is to evoke objects.

[2] It were time also to have done with this famous " theory of obscurity," which the new school has practically raised to the height of a dogma.

gible to the vulgar crowd; it is enough for them to evoke poetic emotion in 'the finest nurtured,' to borrow a phrase from an English esthetician.

In order that what I am saying may not seem to be mere assertion, I will quote at least a few examples from the French poets who have led this movement. The name of these poets is legion. I have taken French writers because they, more decidedly than any others, indicate the new direction of art and are imitated by most European writers.

Besides those whose names are already considered famous, such as Baudelaire and Verlaine, here are the names of a few of them: Jean Moréas, Charles Morice, Henri de Régnier, Charles Vignier, Adrien Remacle, René Ghil, Maurice Maeterlinck, G. Albert Aurier, Rémy de Gourment, Saint-Pol-Roux-le-Magnifique, Georges Rodenbach, le comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac. These are Symbolists and Decadents. Next we have the "Magi": Joséphin Péladan, Paul Adam, Jules Bois, M. Papus, and others.

Besides these there are yet one hundred and forty-one others whom Doumic mentions in the book referred to above.

Here are some examples from the work of those of them who are considered to be the best, beginning with that most celebrated man, acknowledged to be a great artist worthy of a monument—Baudelaire. This is a poem from his celebrated *Fleurs du mal*:—

No. XXIV

Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne,
O vase de tristesse, ô grande taciturne,
Et t'aime d'autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis,
Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits,
Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues
Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues.

Je m'avance à l'attaque, et je grimpe aux assauts,
Comme après un cadavre un chœur de vermisseaux,
Et je chéris, ô bête implacable et cruelle,
Jusqu'à cette froideur par ou tu m'es plus belle! [1]

And this is another by the same writer:—

No. XXXVI

DUELLUM

Deux guerriers ont couru l'un sur l'autre; leurs armes
Ont éclaboussé l'air de lueurs et de sang.
Ces jeux, ces cliquetis du fer sont les vacarmes
D'une jeunesse en proie à l'amour vagissant.

Les glaives sont brisés! comme notre jeunesse,
Ma chère! Mais les dents, les ongles acérés,
Vengent bientôt l'épée et la dague traîtresse.
O fureur des cœurs murs par l'amour ulcérés!

Dans le ravin hanté des chats-pards et des onces
Nos héros, s'étreignant méchamment, ont roulé,
Et leur peau fleurira l'aridité des ronces.
Ce gouffre, c'est l'enfer, de nos amis peuplé!
Roulons-y sans remords, amazone inhumaine,
Afin d'éterniser l'ardeur de notre haine! [2]

To be exact, I should mention that the collection contains verses less comprehensible than these, but not one poem which is plain and can be understood without a certain effort—an effort seldom rewarded, for the feelings which the poet transmits are evil and very low ones. And these feelings are always, and purposely, expressed by him with eccentricity and lack of clearness. This premeditated obscurity is especially noticeable in his prose, where the author could speak clearly if he wanted to.

[1] For translation, see Appendix I.
[2] For translation, see Appendix I.

Take, for instance, the first piece from his *Petits poèmes en prose*:—

L'ÉTRANGER

Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis? ton père, ta mère, ta sœur, ou ton frère?

Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni sœur, ni frère.

Tes amis?

Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.

Ta patrie?

J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.

La beauté?

Je l'aimerais volontiers, déesse et immortelle.

L'or?

Je le hais, comme vous haïssez Dieu.

Et qu'aimes-tu done, extraordinaire étranger?

J'aime les nuages . . . les nuages qui passent . . . là bas, . . . les merveilleux nuages! [1]

The piece called *La Soupe et les nuages* is probably intended to express the unintelligibility of the poet even to her whom he loves. This is the piece in question:—

Ma petite folle bien-aimée me donnait à dîner, et par la fenêtre ouverte de la salle à manger je contemplais les mouvantes architectures que Dieu fait avec les vapeurs, les merveilleuses constructions de l'impalpable. Et je me disais, à travers ma contemplation: "Toutes ces fantasmagories sont presque aussi belles que les yeux de ma belle bien-aimée, la petite folle monstrueuse aux yeux verts."

Et tout-à-coup je reçus un violent coup de poing dans le dos, et j'entendis une voix rauque et charmante, une voix hystérique et comme enrouée par l'eau-de-vie, la voix de ma chère petite bien-aimée, qui me disait, "Allez-vous bientôt

[1] For translation, see Appendix I.

manger votre soupe, s . . . . b . . . . de marchand de nuages?" [1]

However artificial these two pieces may be, it is still possible with some effort to guess at what the author meant them to express, but some of the pieces are absolutely incomprehensible—at least to me. *Le Galant Tireur* is a piece I was quite unable to understand.

LE GALANT TIREUR

Comme la voiture traversait le bois, il la fit arrêter dans le voisinage d'un tir, disant qu'il lui serait agréable de tirer quelques balles pour tuer *le Temps. Tuer ce monstre-là, n'est-ce pas l'occupation la plus ordinaire et la plus légitime de chacun?—Et il offrit galamment la main à sa chère, délicieuse et exécrable femme, à cette mystérieuse femme à laquelle il doit tant de plaisirs, tant de douleurs, et peut-être aussi une grande partie de son génie.*

Plusieurs balles frappèrent loin du but proposé; l'une d'elles s'enfonça même dans le plafond; et comme la charmante créature riait follement, se moquant de la maladresse de son époux, celui-ci se tourna brusquement vers elle, et lui dit: "Observez cette poupée, là-bas, à droite, qui porte le nez en l'air et qui a la mine si hautaine. Eh bien! cher ange, je me figure que c'est vous." *Et il ferma les yeux et il lâcha la détente. La poupée fut nettement décapitée.*

Alors s'inclinant vers sa chère, sa delicieuse, son exécrable femme, son inévitable et impitoyable Muse, et lui baisant respectueusement la main, il ajouta: "Ah! mon cher ange, combien je vous remercie de mon adresse!" [2]

The productions of another celebrity, Verlaine, are not

[1] For translation, see Appendix I.
[2] For translation, see Appendix I.

less affected and unintelligible. This, for instance, is the first poem in the section called *Ariettes oubliées:*

"Le vent dans la plaine
Suspend son haleine."—FAVART.

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.

O le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire . . .
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plainte dormante,
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas? [1]

What *"chœur des petites voix,"* and what *"cri doux que l'herbe agitée expire,"* and what it all means, remains altogether unintelligible to me.

And here is another Ariette:—

VIII.

Dans l'interminable
Ennui de la plaine,
La neige incertaine
Luit comme du sable.

[1] For translation, see Appendix I.

Le ciel est de cuivre,
Sans lueur aucune.
On croirait voir vivre
Et mourir la lune.

Comme des nuées
Flottent gris les chênes
Des forêts prochaines
Parmi les buées.

Le ciel est de cuivre,
Sans lueur aucune.
On croirait voir vivre
Et mourir la lune.

Corneille poussive
Et vous, les loups maigres,
Par ces bises aigres,
Quoi donc vous arrive?

Dans l'interminable
Ennui de la plaine,
La neige incertaine
Luit comme du sable.[1]

How does the moon seem to live and die in a copper heaven? And how can snow shine like sand? The whole thing is not merely unintelligible, but under pretence of conveying an impression it passes off a string of incorrect comparisons and words.

Besides these artificial and obscure poems there are others which are intelligible, but make up for it by being altogether bad both in form and in content. Such are all the poems under the heading *La Sagesse.* The chief place in these verses is occupied by a very poor expression of the most commonplace Roman Catholic and patriotic sentiments. For instance, one meets with verses such as this:—

[1] For translation, see Appendix I.

Je ne veux plus penser qu' à ma mère Marie,
Siège de la sagesse et source de pardons,
Mère de France aussi DE QUI NOUS ATTENDONS
INÉBRANLABLEMENT L'HONNEUR DE LA PATRIE.[1]

Before citing examples from other poets, I must pause to note the amazing celebrity of these two versifiers, Baudelaire and Verlaine, who are now accepted as being great poets. How the French, who had Chénier, Musset, Lamartine, and above all Hugo,—and among whom quite recently flourished the so-called Parnassians: Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, etc.—could attribute such importance to these two versifiers who were far from skilful in form and most contemptible and commonplace in subject-matter, is to me incomprehensible. The life-conception of one of them, Baudelaire, consisted in elevating gross egotism into a theory and replacing morality by a cloudy conception of beauty—especially artificial beauty. Baudelaire had a preference, which he expressed, for a woman's face painted rather than in its natural colour, and for metal trees and a theatrical imitation of water rather than real trees and real water.

The life-conception of the other, Verlaine, consisted in weak profligacy, in confession of moral impotence, and, as an antidote to that impotence, in the grossest Roman Catholic idolatry. Both moreover were quite lacking in naïveté, sincerity, and simplicity, and both overflowed with artificiality, forced originality, and self-assurance. So that in their least bad productions one sees more of M. Baudelaire or M. Verlaine than of what they were describing. But these two indifferent versifiers form a school, and lead hundreds of followers after them.

[1] I do not wish to think any more, except about my mother Mary,
Seat of wisdom and source of pardon,
Also Mother of France, *from whom we*
Steadfastly expect the honour of our country.

There is only one explanation of this fact: it is that the art of the society in which these versifiers lived is not a serious, important matter of life, but a mere amusement. And all amusements grow wearisome by repetition. And in order to make wearisome amusement again tolerable it is necessary to find some means to freshen it up. When, at cards, ombre grows stale, whist is introduced; when whist grows stale, écarté is substituted; when écarté grows stale, some other novelty is invented, and so on. The substance of the matter remains the same, only its form is changed. It is the same with this kind of art. The subject-matter of the art of the upper classes growing continually more and more limited—it has come at last to this, that to the artists of these exclusive classes it seems as if everything has already been said and that to find anything new to say is impossible. And therefore to freshen up this art they look out for fresh forms.

Baudelaire and Verlaine invent such a new form, furbish it up moreover with hitherto unused pornographic details, and—the critics and the public of the upper classes hail them as great writers.

This is the only explanation of the success not of Baudelaire and Verlaine only, but of all the Decadents.

For instance, there are poems by Mallarmé and Maeterlinck which have no meaning, and yet, for all that or perhaps on that very account, are printed by tens of thousands, not only in various publications but even in collections of the best works of the younger poets.

This, for example, is a sonnet by Mallarmé:—

A la nue accablante tu
Basse de basalte et de laves
A même les échos esclaves
Par une trompe sans vertu.

Quel sépulcral naufrage (tu
Le soir, écume, mais y baves)
Suprême une entre les épaves
Abolit le mât dévêtu.

Ou cela que furibond faute
De quelque perdition haute
Tout l'abîme vain éployé
Dans le si blanc cheveu qui traîne
Avarement aura noyé
Le flanc enfant d'une sirène.[1]

("Pan," 1895, No. 1.)

This poem is not exceptional in its incomprehensibility. I have read several other poems by Mallarmé, and they also had no meaning whatever. I give a sample of his prose in Appendix II. There is a whole volume of this prose, called *Divagations*. It is impossible to understand any of it. And that is evidently what the author intended.

And here is a song by Maeterlinck, another celebrated author of to-day:—

Quand il est sorti,
(J'entendis la porte)
Quand il est sorti
Elle avait souri . . .

Mais quand il rentra
(J'entendis la lampe)
Mais quand il rentra
Une autre était là . . .

Et j'ai vu la mort,
(J'entendis son âme)
Et j'ai vu la mort
Qui l'attend encore . . .

[1] This sonnet seems too unintelligible for translation.—Trans.

On est venu dire,
(Mon enfant, j'ai peur)
On est venu dire
Qu'il allait partir . . .

Ma lampe allumée,
(Mon enfant, j'ai peur)
Ma lampe allumée
Me suis approchée . . .

A la première porte,
(Mon enfant, j'ai peur)
A la première porte,
La flamme a tremblé . . .

A la seconde porte,
(Mon enfant, j'ai peur)
A la seconde porte,
La flamme a parlé . . .

A la troisième porte,
(Mon enfant, j'ai peur)
A la troisième porte,
La lumière est morte . . .

Et s'il revenait un jour,
Que faut-il lui dire?
Dites-lui qu'on l'attendit
Jusqu'à s'en mourir . . .

Et s'il m'interroge encore
Sans me reconnaître?
Parlez-lui comme une sœur.
Il souffre peut-être . . .

Et s'il demande où vous êtes
Que faut-il répondre?
Donnez-lui mon anneau d'or
Sans rien lui répondre. . .

Et s'il veut savoir pourquoi
La salle est déserte?

Montrez-lui la lampe éteinte
Et la porte ouverte . . .

Et s'il m'interroge alors
Sur la dernière heure?
Dites lui que j'ai souri
De peur qu'il ne pleure . . .[1]

("Pan," 1895, No. 2.)

Who went out? Who came in? Who is speaking? Who died?

I beg the reader to take the trouble to read through the samples I cite in Appendix III of the celebrated and esteemed young poets: Régnier, Griffin, Verhaeren, Moréas, and Montesquiou. It is important to do so in order to form a clear conception of the present position of art, and not to suppose as many do that Decadentism is an accidental and transitory phenomenon. To avoid the reproach of having selected the worst verses, I have copied out of each volume the poem which happened to stand on page 28.

All the other productions of these poets are equally unintelligible, or can only be understood with great difficulty and then not fully. All the productions of those hundreds of poets, of whom I have named a few, are the same in kind. And among the Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Italians, and us Russians, similar verses are printed. And such productions are printed and made up into book-form, if not by the million then by the hundred-thousand (some of these separate works sell in tens of thousands). For type-setting, paging, printing and binding these books, millions and millions of working days are spent—not less, I think, than went to build the Great Pyramid. Nor is this all. The same is going on in all the other arts: millions and millions of working days

[1] For translation, see Appendix I.

are being spent on the production of equally incomprehensible works in painting, in music, and in drama.

Painting not only does not lag behind poetry in this matter, but rather outstrips it. Here is an extract from the diary of an amateur of art,[1] written when visiting the Paris exhibitions in 1894:—

"I was to-day at three exhibitions: the Symbolists', the Impressionists', and the Neo-Impressionists'. I looked at the pictures conscientiously and carefully, but again felt the same stupefaction and ultimate indignation. The first exhibition, that of Camille Pissarro, was comparatively the most comprehensible, though the pictures were out of drawing, had no content, and the colourings were most improbable. The drawing was so indefinite that you were sometimes unable to make out which way an arm or a head was turned. The subject was generally, *'effets'—Effet de brouillard, Effet du soir, Soleil couchant.* There were some pictures with figures, but without subjects.

"In the colouring, bright blue and bright green predominated. And each picture had its special colour with which the whole picture was, as it were, splashed. For instance in 'A Girl guarding Geese' the special colour is *vert de gris,* and dots of it were splashed about everywhere: on the face, the hair, the hands, and the clothes. In the same gallery—'Durand-Ruel'—were other pictures: by Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, who are all Impressionists. One of them, whose name I could not make out,—it was something like Redon,—had painted a blue face in profile. On the whole face there is only this blue tone, with white-of-lead. Pissarro has a water-colour all done in dots. In the foreground is a cow entirely painted with various-coloured dots. The general colour cannot be distinguished, however

[1] It was Tolstoy's eldest daughter, Tatiana, Mme. Sukhotin; who was herself a talented art-student.—A. M.

much one stands back from, or draws near to, the picture. From there I went to see the Symbolists. I looked at them long without asking anyone for an explanation, trying to guess the meaning; but it is beyond human comprehension. One of the first things to catch my eye was a wooden *haut-relief*, wretchedly executed, representing a woman (naked) who with both hands is squeezing from her two breasts streams of blood. The blood flows down, becoming lilac in colour. Her hair first descends and then rises again and turns into trees. The figure is all coloured yellow, and the hair is brown.

"Next—a picture: a yellow sea on which swims something which is neither a ship nor a heart; on the horizon is a profile with a halo and yellow hair, which changes into the sea, in which it is lost. Some of the painters lay on their colours so thickly that the effect is something between painting and sculpture. A third exhibit was even less comprehensible: a man's profile; before him a flame and black stripes—leeches, as I was afterwards told. At last I asked a gentleman who was there what it meant, and he explained to me that the *haut-relief* was a symbol, and represented *'La Terre.'* The heart swimming in a yellow sea was *'Illusion perdue,'* and the gentleman with the leeches was *'Le Mal.'* There were also some Impressionist pictures: elementary profiles, holding some sort of flowers in their hands; in monotone, out of drawing, and either quite blurred or else marked out with wide black outlines."

This was in 1894; the same tendency is now even more strongly defined, and we have Böcklin, Stuck, Klinger, Sasha Schneider, and others.

The same thing is taking place in the drama. The playwriters give us an architect who, for some reason, has not fulfilled his former high intentions, and consequently climbs on to the roof of a house he has erected and tumbles down head

foremost; [1] or an incomprehensible old woman (who exterminates rats), and who, for an unintelligible reason, takes a poetic child to the sea and there drowns him; [2] or some blind men, who, sitting on the seashore, for some reason always repeat one and the same thing; [3] or a bell of some kind, which flies into a lake and there rings.[4]

And the same is happening in music—in that art which more than any other one would have thought should be intelligible to everybody.

An acquaintance of yours, a musician of repute, sits down to the piano and plays you what he says is a new composition of his own or of one of the new composers. You hear the strange, loud sounds, and admire the gymnastic exercises performed by his fingers, and you see that the performer wishes to convey to you that the sounds he is producing express various poetic strivings of the soul. You see his intention, but no feeling whatever except weariness is transmitted to you. The execution lasts long, at least it seems very long to you because you do not receive any clear impression, and involuntarily you remember the words of Alphonse Karr, "*Plus ça va vite, plus ça dure longtemps.*" [5] And it occurs to you that perhaps it is all a mystification; perhaps the performer is trying you—just throwing his hands and fingers wildly about the key-board in the hope that you will fall into the trap and praise him, and then he will laugh and confess that he only wanted to see if he could hoax you. But when at last the piece does finish, and the perspiring and agitated musician rises from the piano obviously anticipating praise, you see that it was all done in earnest.

The same thing takes place at all the concerts with pieces

[1] Ibsen's *The Master-Builder*.—A. M.
[2] Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*.—A. M.
[3] Maeterlinck's *Les Aveügles*.—A. M.
[4] G. Hauptmann's *Die versunkene Glocke*.—A. M.
[5] "The quicker it goes the longer it lasts."

by Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, Brahms, and (newest of all) Richard Strauss, and the numberless other composers of the new school, who unceasingly produce opera after opera, symphony after symphony, piece after piece.

The same is occurring in a domain in which it seemed hard to be unintelligible—in the sphere of novels and short stories.

Read *Là-Bas* by Huysmans, or some of Kipling's short stories, or *L'annonciateur* by Villiers de l'Isle Adam in his *Contes Cruels,* etc., and you will find them not only "*abscons*" (to use a word adopted by the new writers) but absolutely unintelligible both in form and in substance. Such, again, is the work by E. Morel, *Terre Promise,* now appearing in the *Revue Blanche,* and such are most of the new novels. The style is very high-flown, the feelings seem to be most elevated, but you can't make out what is happening, to whom it is happening, and where it is happening. And such is the bulk of the young art of our time.

People who grew up in the first half of this century, admiring Goethe, Schiller, Musset, Hugo, Dickens, Beethoven, Chopin, Raphael, da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and Delaroche, being unable to make head or tail of this new art, simply attribute its productions to tasteless insanity, and wish to ignore them. But such an attitude towards this new art is quite unjustifiable because, in the first place, this art is spreading more and more, and has already conquered for itself a firm position in society similar to that occupied by the Romanticists in the third decade of this century; and secondly and chiefly because, if it is permissible to judge in this way of the productions of the latest form of art, called by us Decadent art, merely because we do not understand it, then remember, there are an enormous number of people—all the labourers and many of the non-labouring folk—who, in just the same way, do not comprehend those productions of art which we consider admirable: the verses of our favourite

artists—Goethe, Schiller, and Hugo; the novels of Dickens, the music of Beethoven and Chopin, the pictures of Raphael, Michael Angelo, da Vinci, and so forth.

If I have a right to think that great masses of people do not understand and do not like what I consider undoubtedly good because they are not sufficiently developed, then I have no right to deny that perhaps the reason why I cannot understand and cannot like the new productions of art is merely that I am still insufficiently developed to understand them. If I have a right to say that I, and the majority of people who are in sympathy with me, do not understand the productions of the new art simply because there is nothing in it to understand and because it is bad art, then with just the same right the still larger majority, the whole labouring mass, who do not understand what I consider admirable art, can say that what I reckon as good art is bad art and there is nothing in it to understand.

I once saw the injustice of such condemnation of the new art with especial clearness, when in my presence a certain poet, who writes incomprehensible verses, ridiculed incomprehensible music with gay self-assurance; and shortly afterwards a certain musician, who composes incomprehensible symphonies, laughed at incomprehensible poetry with equal self-confidence. I have no right and no authority to condemn the new art on the ground that I (a man educated in the first half of the century) do not understand it; I can only say that it is incomprehensible to me. The only advantage the art I acknowledge has over the Decadent art lies in the fact that the art I recognise is comprehensible to a somewhat larger number of people than present-day art.

The fact that I am accustomed to a certain exclusive art and can understand it, but am unable to understand another still more exclusive art, does not give me a right to con-

clude that my art is the real, true art, and that the other one, which I do not understand, is an unreal, a bad art. I can only conclude that art, becoming ever more and more exclusive, has become more and more incomprehensible to an ever-increasing number of people, and that, in this its progress towards greater and greater incomprehensibility (on one level of which I am standing, with the art familiar to me), it has reached a point where it is understood by a very small number of the elect, and the number of these chosen people is becoming ever smaller and smaller.

As soon as ever the art of the upper classes separated itself from universal art, a conviction arose that art may be art and yet be incomprehensible to the masses. And as soon as this position was admitted it had inevitably to be admitted also that art may be intelligible only to the very smallest number of the elect, and eventually to two, or to one, of our nearest friends, or to oneself alone. Which is practically what is being said by modern artists:—"I create and understand myself, and if anyone does not understand me so much the worse for him."

The assertion that art may be good art, and at the same time incomprehensible to a great number of people, is extremely unjust and its consequences are ruinous to art itself; but at the same time it is so common, and has so eaten into our conceptions, that it is impossible sufficiently to elucidate the whole absurdity of it.

Nothing is more common than to hear it said of reputed works of art, that they are very good but very difficult to understand. We are quite used to such assertions, and yet to say that a work of art is good, but incomprehensible to the majority of men, is the same as saying of some kind of food that it is very good but that most people can't eat it. The majority of men may not like rotten cheese or putrefying grouse, dishes esteemed by people with perverted tastes; but

bread and fruit are only good when they are such as please the majority of men. And it is the same with art. Perverted art may not please the majority of men, but good art always pleases everyone.

It is said that the very best works of art are such that they cannot be understood by the masses, but are accessible only to the elect who are prepared to understand these great works. But if the majority of men do not understand, the knowledge necessary to enable them to understand should be taught and explained to them. But it turns out that there is no such knowledge, that the works cannot be explained, and that those who say the majority do not understand good works of art, still do not explain those works, but only tell us that in order to understand them one must read, and see, and hear, these same works over and over again. But this is not to explain, it is only to habituate! And people may habituate themselves to anything, even to the very worst things. As people may habituate themselves to bad food, to spirits, tobacco, and opium, just in the same way they may habituate themselves to bad art—and that is exactly what is being done.

Moreover it cannot be said that the majority of people lack the taste to esteem the highest works of art. The majority always have understood, and still understand, what we also recognise as being the very best art: the epic of Genesis, the Gospel parables, folk-legends, fairy-tales, and folk-songs, are understood by all. How can it be that the majority has suddenly lost its capacity to understand what is high in our art?

Of a speech it may be said that it is admirable, but incomprehensible to those who do not know the language in which it is delivered. A speech delivered in Chinese may be excellent, and may yet remain incomprehensible to me if I do not know Chinese; but what distinguishes a work of

art from all other mental activity is just the fact that its language is understood by all, and that it infects all without distinction. The tears and laughter of a Chinaman infect me just as the laughter and tears of a Russian; and it is the same with painting and music, and also poetry, when it is translated into a language I understand. The songs of a Kirghiz or of a Japanese touch me, though in a lesser degree than they touch a Kirghiz or a Japanese. I am also touched by Japanese painting, Indian architecture, and Arabian stories. If I am but little touched by a Japanese song and a Chinese novel, it is not that I do not understand these productions, but that I know and am accustomed to higher works of art. It is not because their art is above me. Great works of art are only great because they are accessible and comprehensible to everyone. The story of Joseph, translated into the Chinese language, touches a Chinese. The story of Sakya Muni (Buddha) touches us. And there are, and must be, buildings, pictures, statues, and music, of similar power. So that if art fails to move men it cannot be said that this is due to the spectators' or hearers' lack of understanding; but the conclusion to be drawn may be, and should be, that such art is either bad or is not art at all.

Art is differentiated from activity of the understanding, which demands preparation and a certain sequence of knowledge (so that one cannot learn trigonometry before knowing geometry), by the fact that it acts on people independently of their state of development and education, that the charm of a picture, of sounds, or of forms, infects any man, whatever his plane of development.

The business of art lies just in this: to make that understood and felt which in the form of an argument might be incomprehensible and inaccessible. Usually it seems to the recipient of a truly artistic impression that he knew the thing before, but had been unable to express it.

And such has always been the nature of good, supreme art; the *Iliad,* the *Odyssey;* the stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; the Hebrew prophets, the psalms, the Gospel parables; the story of Sakya Muni, and the hymns of the Vedas: all transmit very exalted feelings, and are nevertheless quite comprehensible now to us, educated or uneducated, as they were comprehensible to the men of those times, long ago, who were even less educated than our labourers. People talk about incomprehensibility; but if art is the transmission of feelings flowing from man's religious perception, how can a feeling be incomprehensible which is founded on religion, that is, on man's relation to God? Such art should be, and has actually always been, comprehensible to everybody, because every man's relation to God is one and the same. This is why the churches and the images in them were always comprehensible to everyone. The hindrance to an understanding of the best and highest feelings (as is said in the Gospel) does not at all lie in deficiency of development or learning, but on the contrary in false development and false learning. A good and lofty work of art may be incomprehensible, but not to simple, unperverted peasant labourers (all that is highest is understood by them)—it may be and often is unintelligible to erudite, perverted people destitute of religion. And this continually occurs in our society, in which the highest feelings are simply not understood. For instance, I know people who consider themselves most refined and who say that they do not understand the poetry of love to one's neighbour, of self-sacrifice, or of chastity.

So that good, great, universal, religious art may be incomprehensible to a small circle of spoilt people, but certainly not to any large number of plain men.

Art cannot be incomprehensible to the great masses only because it is very good,—as artists of our day are fond of

telling us. Rather we are bound to conclude that this art is unintelligible to the great masses only because it is very bad art, or even is not art at all. So that the favourite argument (naïvely accepted by the cultured crowd), that in order to feel art one has first to understand it (which really only means habituate oneself to it), is the truest indication that what we are asked to understand by such a method is either very bad, exclusive art, or is not art at all.

People say that works of art do not please the people because they are incapable of understanding them. But if the aim of works of art is to infect people with the emotion the artist has experienced, how can one talk about not understanding?

A man of the people reads a book, sees a picture, hears a play or a symphony, and is touched by no feeling. He is told that this is because he cannot understand. People promise to let a man see a certain show; he enters and sees nothing. He is told that this is because his sight is not prepared for this show. But the man knows for certain that he sees quite well, and if he does not see what people promised to show him he only concludes (as is quite just) that those who undertook to show him the spectacle have not fulfilled their engagement. And it is perfectly just for a man who does feel the influence of some works of art, to come to this conclusion concerning artists who do not, by their works, evoke feeling in him. To say that the reason a man is not touched by my art is because he is still too stupid, besides being very self-conceited and also rude, is to reverse the rôles, and for the sick to send the hale to bed.

Voltaire said that *"Tous les genres sont bons, hors le genre ennuyeux"*;[1] but with even more right one may say of art that *Tous les genres sons bons, hors celui qu'on ne*

[1] All styles are good except the wearisome style.

comprend pas, or *qui ne produit pas son effet,*[1] for of what value is an article which fails to effect what was intended?

Mark this above all: if only it be admitted that art may be unintelligible to anyone of sound mind and yet still be art, there is no reason why any circle of perverted people should not compose works tickling their own perverted feelings, and comprehensible to no one but themselves, and call it "art," as is actually being done by the so-called Decadents.

The direction art has taken may be compared to placing on a large circle other circles, smaller and smaller, until a cone is formed, the apex of which is no longer a circle at all. That is what has happened to the art of our times.

[1] All styles are good except that which is not understood, *or* which fails to produce its effect.

CHAPTER XI

Counterfeits of art produced by: Borrowing; Imitating; Striking; Interesting. Qualifications needful for production of real works of art, and those sufficient for production of counterfeits.

BECOMING ever poorer and poorer in subject-matter and more and more unintelligible in form, the art of the upper classes in its latest productions has even lost all the characteristics of art and has been replaced by imitations of art. Not only has upper-class art in consequence of its separation from universal art become poor in subject-matter and bad in form, that is, ever more and more unintelligible,—it has in course of time ceased even to be art at all and has been replaced by counterfeits.

This has resulted from the following causes. Universal art arises only when some one of the people having experienced a strong emotion feels the necessity of transmitting it to others. The art of the rich classes on the other hand arises not from the artist's inner impulse, but chiefly because people of the upper classes demand amusement and pay well for it. They demand from art the transmission of feelings that please them, and this demand artists try to meet. But it is a very difficult task, for people of the wealthy classes spending their lives in idleness and luxury desire to be continually diverted by art; and art, even the lowest, cannot be produced at will, but has to generate spontaneously in the artist's inner self. And therefore, to satisfy the demands of people of the upper classes, artists have had to devise methods of producing imitations of art. And such methods have been devised.

These methods are those of (1) borrowing, (2) imitating, (3) striking (producing effects), and (4) interesting.

The first method consists in borrowing whole subjects, or merely separate features, from former works recognised by everyone as being poetic, and in so re-shaping them with sundry additions that they should have an appearance of novelty.

Such works, evoking in people of a certain class memories of artistic feelings formerly experienced, produce an impression similar to art, and provided only that they conform to other needful conditions they pass for art among those who seek for pleasure from art. Subjects borrowed from previous works of art are usually called poetic subjects. Objects and people thus borrowed are called poetic objects and people. Thus in our circle all sorts of legends, sagas, and ancient traditions, are considered poetic subjects. Among poetic people and objects we reckon maidens, warriors, shepherds, hermits, angels, devils of all sorts, moonlight, thunder, mountains, the sea, precipices, flowers, long hair, lions, lambs, doves, and nightingales. In general all those objects are considered poetic which have most frequently been used by former artists in their productions.

Some forty years ago a stupid but highly cultured—*ayant beaucoup d'acquis*—lady (since deceased) asked me to listen to a novel written by herself. It began with a heroine who in a poetic white dress, and with poetically flowing hair, was reading poetry near some water in a poetic wood. The scene was in Russia, but suddenly from behind the bushes the hero appears, wearing a hat with a feather *à la Guillaume Tell* (the book specially mentioned this) and accompanied by two poetical white dogs. The authoress deemed all this highly poetic, and it might have passed muster if only it had not been necessary for the hero to speak. But as soon as the gentleman in the hat *à la Guillaume Tell* began to converse with the maiden in the white dress, it became obvious that the authoress had nothing to say, but had merely

been moved by poetic memories of other works, and imagined that by ringing the changes on those memories she could produce an artistic impression. But an artistic impression, that is to say, infection, is only received when an author has in the manner peculiar to himself experienced the feeling which he transmits, and not when he passes on another man's feeling previously transmitted to him. Such poetry from poetry cannot infect people, it can only simulate a work of art, and even that only to people of perverted esthetic taste. The lady in question being very stupid and devoid of talent, it was at once apparent how the case stood; but when such borrowing is resorted to by people who are erudite and talented and have cultivated the technique of their art, we get those borrowings from the Greek, the antique, the Christian or mythological world, which have become so numerous, and which particularly in our day continue to increase and multiply, and are accepted by the public as works of art if only the borrowings are well mounted by means of the technique of the particular art to which they belong.

As a characteristic example of such counterfeits of art in the realm of poetry, take Rostand's *Princesse Lointaine,* in which there is not a spark of art, but which seems very poetic to many people, and probably also to its author.

The second method of imparting a semblance of art is that which I have called imitating. The essence of this method consists in supplying details accompanying the thing described or depicted. In literary art this method consists in describing in the minutest details the external appearance, the faces, the clothes, the gestures, the tones, and the habitations, of the characters represented, with all the occurrences met with in life. For instance in novels and stories, when one of the characters speaks we are told in what voice he spoke and what he was doing at the time. And the things said are not given so that they should have as much sense

as possible, but as they are in life, disconnectedly, and with interruptions and omissions. In dramatic art, besides such imitation of real speech, this method consists in having all the accessories and all the people just like those in real life. In painting this method assimilates painting to photography and destroys the difference between them. And strange to say this method is used also in music: music tries to imitate, not only by its rhythm but also by its very sounds, the sounds which in real life accompany the thing it wishes to represent.

The third method is by action, often purely physical, on the outer senses. Work of this kind is said to be "striking," "effective." In all arts these effects consist chiefly in contrasts; in bringing together the terrible and the tender, the beautiful and the hideous, the loud and the soft, darkness and light, the most ordinary and the most extraordinary. In verbal art, besides effects of contrast there are also effects consisting in the description of things that have never before been described. These are usually pornographic details evoking sexual desire, or details of suffering and death evoking feelings of horror, such, for instance, as when describing a murder, to give a detailed medical account of the lacerated tissues, of the swellings, of the smell, quantity, and appearance of the blood. It is the same in painting: besides all kinds of other contrasts, one is coming into vogue which consists in giving careful finish to one object and being careless about all the rest. The chief and usual effects in painting are effects of light and the presentation of the horrible. In the drama the most common effects, besides contrasts, are tempests, thunder, moonlight, scenes at sea or by the seashore, changes of costume, exposure of the female body, madness, murders, and death generally: the dying person exhibiting in detail all the phases of agony. In music the most usual effects are a *crescendo,* passing from the softest and simplest sounds to the loudest and most complex crash

of the full orchestra; a repetition of the same sounds *arpeggio* in all the octaves and on various instruments; or for the harmony, tone, and rhythm, to be not at all those naturally flowing from the course of the musical thought but such as strike one by their unexpectedness. Besides these, the commonest effects in music are produced in a purely physical manner by strength of sound, especially in an orchestra.

Such are some of the most usual effects in the various arts, but there yet remains one common to them all, namely, to convey by means of one art what it would be natural to convey by another: for instance, to make music describe (as is done by the programme music of Wagner and his followers), or to make painting, the drama, or poetry, induce a frame of mind (as is aimed at by all the Decadent art).

The fourth method is that of interesting (that is, absorbing the mind) in connection with works of art. The interest may lie in an intricate plot—a method till quite recently much employed in English novels and French plays, but now going out of fashion and being replaced by realism, that is, by detailed description of some historic period or some branch of contemporary life. For example, in a novel interest may consist in a description of Egyptian or Roman life, the life of miners, or that of the clerks in a large shop. The reader becomes interested, and mistakes this interest for an artistic impression. The interest may also depend on the very method of expression; a kind of interest that has now come much into use. Both verse and prose, as well as pictures, plays, and music, are constructed so that they must be guessed like riddles, and this process of guessing, again, affords pleasure and gives a semblance of the feeling received from art.

It is very often said that a work of art is very good because it is poetic, or realistic, or striking, or interesting; whereas not only can neither the first, nor the second, nor

the third, nor the fourth, of these attributes supply a standard of excellence in art, but they have not even anything in common with art.

Poetic—means borrowed. All borrowing merely recalls to the reader, spectator, or listener, some dim recollection of artistic impressions received from previous works of art, and does not infect with feeling experienced by the artist himself. A work founded on something borrowed, like Goethe's *Faust* for instance, may be very well executed and be full of mind and every beauty, but because it lacks the chief characteristic of a work of art—completeness, oneness, the inseparable unity of form and content expressing the feeling the artist has experienced—it cannot produce a really artistic impression. In availing himself of this method the artist only transmits the feeling received by him from a previous work of art; therefore every borrowing, whether it be of whole subjects or of various scenes, situations, or descriptions, is but a reflection of art, a simulation of it, but not art itself. And therefore, to say that a certain production is good because it is poetic,—that is, resembles a work of art,—is like saying of a coin that it is good because it resembles real money.

Equally little can imitation, realism, serve, as many people suppose, as a measure of the quality of art. Imitation cannot be such a measure, for the chief characteristic of art is the infection of others with the feelings the artist has experienced, and infection with a feeling is not only not identical with description of the accessories of what is transmitted, but is usually hindered by superfluous details. The attention of the receiver of the artistic impression is diverted by all these well-observed details, and they hinder the transmission of feeling even when it exists.

To value a work of art by the degree of its realism, by the accuracy of the details reproduced, is as strange as to judge of the nutritive quality of food by its external appearance.

When we appraise a work according to its realism, we only show that we are talking, not of a work of art but of its counterfeit.

Neither does the third method of imitating art—by the use of what is striking or effective—coincide with real art any better than the two former methods, for in effectiveness (the effects of novelty, of the unexpected, of contrasts, of the horrible) there is no transmission of feeling but only an action on the nerves. If an artist were to paint a bloody wound admirably, the sight of the wound would strike me, but it would not be art. One prolonged note on a powerful organ will produce a striking impression, will often even cause tears, but there is no music in it, because no feeling is transmitted. Yet such physiological effects are constantly mistaken for art by people of our circle, and this not only in music but also in poetry, painting, and the drama. It is said that art has become refined. On the contrary, thanks to the pursuit of effects, it has become very coarse. A new piece is brought out and accepted all over Europe, such, for instance, as *Hanneles Himmelfaht*,[1] in which play the author wishes to transmit to the spectators pity for a persecuted girl. To evoke this feeling in the audience by means of art, the author should either make one of the characters express this pity in such a way as to infect everyone, or should describe the girl's feelings correctly. But he cannot or will not do this and chooses another way, more complicated in stage management but easier for the author. He makes the girl die on the stage; and still further to increase the physiological effect on the spectators, he extinguishes the lights in the theatre, leaving the audience in the dark, and to the sound of dismal music shows how the girl is pursued and beaten by her drunken father. The girl shrinks—screams—groans—and falls. Angels appear and

[1] By G. Hauptmann.

carry her away. And the audience, experiencing some excitement while this is going on, are fully convinced that this is true esthetic feeling. But there is nothing esthetic in such excitement, for there is no infection of man by man, but only a mingled feeling of pity for another and of self-congratulation that it is not I who am suffering: it is like what we feel at the sight of an execution, or what the Romans felt in their circuses.

The substitution of effect for esthetic feeling is particularly noticeable in musical art—that art which by its nature has an immediate physiological action on the nerves. Instead of transmitting by means of a melody the feelings he has experienced, a composer of the new school accumulates and complicates sounds, and by now strengthening now weakening them, he produces on the audience a physiological effect of a kind that can be measured by an apparatus invented for that purpose.[1] And the public mistake this physiological effect for the effect of art.

As to the fourth method—that of interesting—it also is frequently confounded with art. One often hears it said, not only of a poem, a novel, or a picture, but even of a musical work, that it is interesting. What does this mean? To speak of an interesting work of art means either that we receive from a work of art information new to us, or that the work is not fully intelligible and that little by little, and with effort, we arrive at its meaning and experience a certain pleasure in this process of guessing it. In neither case has the interest anything in common with artistic impression. Art aims at infecting people with feeling experienced by the artist. But the mental effort necessary to enable the spectator, listener, or reader, to assimilate the new

[1] An apparatus exists by means of which a very sensitive arrow, in dependence on the tension of a muscle of the arm, will indicate the physiological action of music on the nerves and muscles.—L. T.

information contained in the work, or to guess the puzzles propounded hinders this infection by distracting him. And therefore the interest of a work not only has nothing to do with its excellence as a work of art, but rather hinders than assists artistic impression.

We may, in a work of art, meet with what is poetic, and realistic, and striking, and interesting, but these things cannot replace the essential of art—feeling experienced by the artist. Latterly, in upper-class art most of the objects given out as being works or art are of the kind which only resemble art and are devoid of its essential quality—feeling experienced by the artist. And for the diversion of the rich such objects are continually being produced in enormous quantities by the artisans of art.

Many conditions must be fulfilled to enable a man to produce a real work of art. It is necessary that he should stand on the level of the highest life-conception of his time, that he should experience feeling and have the desire and capacity to transmit it, and that he should moreover have a talent for some one of the forms of art. It is very seldom that all these conditions necessary to the production of true art are combined. But in order—aided by the customary methods of borrowing, imitating, introducing effects, and interesting—unceasingly to produce the counterfeits of art which pass for art in our society and are well paid for, it is only necessary to have a talent for some branch of art; and this is very often to be met with. By talent I mean ability: in literary art the ability to express one's thoughts and impressions easily, and to notice and remember characteristic details; in graphic arts to distinguish and remember lines, forms, and colours; in music to distinguish the intervals and to remember and transmit the sequence of sounds. And a man in our time if only he possesses such a talent and selects some speciality, may after

learning the methods of counterfeiting used in his branch of art,—if he has patience and if his esthetic feeling (which would render such productions revolting to him) be atrophied —unceasingly to the end of his life turn out works which will pass for art in our society.

To produce such counterfeits, definite rules or recipes exist in each branch of art. So the talented man, having assimilated them, may produce such works *à froid,* cold-drawn, without feeling.

In order to write poems, a man of literary talent needs only these qualifications: to acquire the knack, conformably with the requirements of rhyme and rhythm, of using, instead of the one really suitable word, ten others meaning approximately the same; to learn how to take any phrase which to be clear has but one natural order of words, and despite all possible dislocations still to retain some sense in it; and lastly, to be able, guided by the words required for the rhymes, to devise some semblance of thoughts, feelings, or descriptions, to suit these words. Having acquired these qualifications, he may unceasingly produce poems—short or long, religious, amatory, or patriotic, according to the demand.

If a man of literary talent wishes to write a story or novel, he need only form his style—that is, learn how to describe all that he sees—and accustom himself to remember or note down details. When he has accustomed himself to this, he can, according to his inclination or the demand, unceasingly produce novels or stories—historical, naturalistic, social, erotic, psychological, or even religious, for which latter kind a demand and fashion begins to show itself. He can take subjects from books or from the events of life, and can copy the characters of the people in his book from his acquaintances.

And such novels and stories, if only they are decked out

with well-observed and carefully noted details, preferably erotic ones, will be considered works of art, even though they may not contain a spark of feeling experienced.

To produce art in dramatic form, a talented man, in addition to all that is required for novels and stories, must also learn to furnish his characters with as many smart and witty sentences as possible, must know how to utilise theatrical effects, and how to entwine the action of his characters so that there should be no long conversations, but as much bustle and movement on the stage as possible. If the writer is able to do this, he may produce dramatic works one after another without stopping, selecting his subjects from the reports of the law courts, or from the latest society topic, such as hypnotism, heredity, etc., or from deep antiquity, or even from the realms of fancy.

In the sphere of painting and sculpture it is still easier for the talented man to produce imitations of art. He need only learn to draw, paint, and model—especially naked bodies. Thus equipped he can continue to paint pictures, or model statues, one after another, choosing subjects according to his bent: mythological, or religious, or fantastic, or symbolic; or he may depict what is written about in the papers: a coronation, a strike, the Turko-Grecian war, famine scenes; or, commonest of all, he may just copy anything he thinks beautiful—from naked women to copper basins.

For the production of musical art the talented man needs still less of what constitutes the essence of art, that is, feeling wherewith to infect others; but on the other hand he requires more physical, gymnastic labour than for any other art, unless it be dancing. To produce works of musical art he must first learn to move his fingers on some instrument as rapidly as those who have reached the highest perfection; next he must know how in former times polyphonic music was written, must study what are called counterpoint and

fugue; and, furthermore, he must learn orchestration, that is, how to utilise the effects of the instruments. But once he has learned all this, the composer may unceasingly produce one work after another: whether programme-music, opera, or song (devising sounds more or less corresponding to the words), or chamber music, that is, he may take another man's themes and work them up into definite forms by means of counterpoint and fugue; or, what is commonest of all, he may compose fantastic music, that is, he may take a conjunction of sounds which happens to come to hand, and pile every sort of complication and ornamentation on to this chance combination.

Thus in all realms of art counterfeits of art are manufactured to a ready-made, prearranged recipe, and these counterfeits the public of our upper classes accept for real art.

And this substitution of counterfeits for real works of art was the third and most important consequence of the separation of the art of the upper classes from universal art.

CHAPTER XII

Causes of production of counterfeits. Professionalism. Criticism. Schools of art.

In our society three conditions co-operate to cause the production of objects of counterfeit art. They are (1) the considerable remuneration of artists for their productions and the professionalism which this has produced among artists, (2) art criticism, and (3) schools of art.

While art was as yet undivided, and only religious art was valued and rewarded while indiscriminate art was left unrewarded, there were no counterfeits of art or, if any existed, being exposed to the criticism of the whole people they quickly disappeared. But as soon as that division occurred, and the upper classes acclaimed every kind of art as good if only it afforded them pleasure, and began to reward such art more highly than any other social activity, a large number of people immediately devoted themselves to this activity and art assumed quite a different character and became a profession.

And as soon as this occurred the chief and most precious quality of art—its sincerity—was at once greatly weakened and eventually quite destroyed.

The professional artist lives by his art and has continually to invent subjects for his works, and does invent them. And it is obvious how great a difference must exist between works of art produced on the one hand by men such as the Jewish prophets, the authors of the Psalms, Francis of Assisi, the authors of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* of folk-stories, legends, and folk-songs, many of whom not only received no remuneration for their work but did not even attach their names to it, and, on the other hand, works produced by court poets, drama-

tists, and musicians, receiving honours and remuneration; and later on by professional artists who lived by the trade, receiving remuneration from newspaper editors, publishers, impresarios, and in general from the agents who come between the artists and the town public—the consumers of art.

Professionalism is the first condition of the diffusion of false, counterfeit art.

The second condition is the growth in recent times of art criticism, that is, the valuation of art not by everybody, and above all not by plain men, but by erudite, that is, by perverted and at the same time self-confident individuals.

A friend of mine, speaking of the relation of critics to artists, half-jokingly defined it thus: "Critics are the stupid who discuss the wise." However partial, inexact, and rude this definition may be, it is yet partly true, and is incomparably juster than the definition which considers critics to be men who can explain works of art.

"Critics explain!" What do they explain?

The artist, if a real artist, has by his work transmitted to others the feeling he experienced. What is there, then, to explain?

If a work is a good work of art, then the feeling expressed by the artist—be it moral or immoral—transmits itself to other people. If transmitted to others, then they feel it and all interpretations are superfluous. If the work does not infect people, no explanation can make it contagious. An artist's work cannot be interpreted. Had it been possible to explain in words what he wished to convey, the artist would have expressed himself in words. He expressed it by his art, only because the feeling he experienced could not be otherwise transmitted. The interpretation of works of art by words only indicates that the interpreter is himself incapable of feeling the infection of art. And this is actually the case for, however strange it may seem to say so, critics

have always been people less susceptible than other men to the contagion of art. For the most part they are able writers, educated and clever, but with their capacity for being infected by art quite perverted or atrophied. And therefore their writings have always largely contributed, and still contribute, to the perversion of the taste of that public which reads them and trusts them.

Art criticism did not exist—could not and cannot exist—in societies where art is undivided, and where, consequently, it is appraised by the religious conception of life common to the whole people. Art criticism grew, and could grow, only on the art of the upper classes who did not acknowledge the religious perception of their time.

Universal art has a definite and indubitable internal criterion—religious perception; upper-class art lacks this, and therefore the appreciators of that art are obliged to cling to some external criterion. And they find it in "the judgments of the finest-nurtured," as an English esthetician has phrased it, that is, in the authority of the people who are considered educated; nor in this alone, but also in a tradition of such authorities. This tradition is extremely misleading, both because the opinions of "the finest-nurtured" are often mistaken, and also because judgments which were valid once cease to be so with the lapse of time. But the critics, having no basis for their judgments, never cease to repeat their traditions. The classical tragedians were once considered good, and therefore criticism considers them to be so still. Dante was esteemed a great poet, Raphael a great painter, Bach a great musician—and the critics, lacking a standard by which to separate good art from bad, not only consider these artists great, but regard all their productions as admirable and worthy of imitation. Nothing has contributed, and still contributes, so much to the perversion of art as these authorities set up by criticism. A man produces a work of art, express-

ing in his own peculiar manner, like every true artist, a feeling he has experienced. Most people are infected by the artist's feeling, and his work becomes known. Then criticism, discussing the artist, says that the work is not bad, but all the same the artist is not a Dante, nor a Shakespeare, nor a Goethe, nor a Raphael, nor what Beethoven was in his last period. And the young artist sets to work to copy those held up for his imitation, and he produces not only feeble works but false works, counterfeits of art.

Thus, for instance, our Púshkin writes his short poems, *Evgéni Onégin, The Gipsies,* and his stories—works all varying in quality, but all true art. But then, under the influence of false criticism extolling Shakespeare, he writes *Borís Godunóv*, a cold, brain-spun work, and this production is lauded by the critics, set up as a model, and imitations of it appear: *Mínin* by Ostróvski, and *Tsar Borís* by Alexéy Tolstóy, and such imitations of imitations as crowd all literatures with insignificant productions. The chief harm done by the critics is this, that themselves lacking the capacity to be infected by art (and that is the characteristic of all critics, for did they not lack this they could not attempt the impossible —the interpretation of works of art), they pay most attention to, and eulogise, brain-spun invented works, and set these up as models worthy of imitation. That is the reason they so confidently extol, in literature, the Greek tragedians, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespeare, Goethe (almost all he wrote), and, among recent writers, Zola and Ibsen; in music, Beethoven's last period, and Wagner. To justify their praise of these brain-spun invented works, they devise entire theories (of which the famous theory of beauty is one); and not only dull but also talented people compose works in strict deference to these theories; and often even real artists, doing violence to their genius, submit to them.

Every false work extolled by the critics serves as a door

through which the hypocrites of art at once crowd in.

It is solely due to the critics, who in our times still praise rude, savage, and, for us, often meaningless works of the ancient Greeks: Sophocles, Euripides, Æschylus, and especially Aristophanes; or, of modern writers, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespeare; in painting, all of Raphael, all of Michael Angelo, including his absurd "Last Judgment"; in music, the whole of Bach, and the whole of Beethoven, including his last period,—thanks only to them, have the Ibsens, Maeterlincks, Verlaines, Mallarmés, Puvis de Chavannes, Klingers, Böcklins, Stucks, Schneiders; in music, the Wagners, Liszts, Berliozes, Brahmses, and Richard Strausses, etc., and all that immense mass of good-for-nothing imitators of these imitators, become possible in our day.

As a good illustration of the harmful influence of criticism, take its relation to Beethoven. Among his innumerable hasty productions written to order, there are, notwithstanding their artificiality of form, works of true art. But he grows deaf, cannot hear, and begins to write invented, unfinished works, which are consequently often meaningless and musically unintelligible. I know that musicians can imagine sounds vividly enough, and can almost hear what they read, but imaginary sounds can never be the same as real ones, and every composer must hear his production in order to perfect it. Beethoven however could not hear, could not perfect his work, and consequently published productions which are artistic ravings. But criticism, having once acknowledged him to be a great composer, seizes on just these abnormal works with special gusto and searches for extraordinary beauties in them. And, to justify its praises (perverting the very meaning of musical art), it attributed to music the property of describing what it cannot describe. And imitators appear—an innumerable host of imitators of

these abnormal attempts at artistic productions which Beethoven wrote when he was deaf.

Then Wagner appears, who at first in critical articles praises just Beethoven's last period, connecting this music with Schopenhauer's mystical theory that music is the expression of Will—not of separate manifestations of will objectivised on various planes, but of its very essence—which is in itself as absurd as this music of Beethoven. And afterwards he composes music of his own on this theory, in conjunction with another still more erroneous system of the union of all the arts. After Wagner yet new imitators appear, diverging yet further from art: Brahms, Richard Strauss, and others.

Such are the results of criticism. But the third condition of the perversion of art, namely, art schools, is almost more harmful still.

As soon as art became, not art for the whole people but for a rich class, it became a profession; as soon as it became a profession, methods were devised to teach it; people who chose this profession of art began to learn these methods, and thus professional schools sprang up: classes of rhetoric or literature in the public schools, academies for painting, conservatoires for music, schools for dramatic art.

In these schools art is taught! But art is the transmission to others of a special feeling experienced by the artist. How can this be taught in schools?

No school can evoke feeling in a man, and still less can it teach him how to manifest it in the one particular manner natural to him alone. But the essence of art lies in these. things.

The one thing these schools can teach is how to transmit feelings experienced by other artists in the way those other artists transmitted them. And this is just what the professional schools do teach; and such instruction not only

does not assist the spread of true art but, on the contrary, by diffusing counterfeits of art does more than anything else to deprive people of the capacity to understand true art.

In literary art people are taught how, without having anything they wish to say, to write a many-paged composition on a theme about which they have never thought and, moreover, to write it so that it should resemble the work of an author admitted to be celebrated. This is taught in schools.

In painting the chief training consists in learning to draw and paint from copies and models, the naked body chiefly (the very thing that is never seen, and which a man occupied with real art hardly ever has to depict), and to draw and paint as former masters drew and painted. The composition of pictures is taught by giving out themes similar to those which have been treated by former acknowledged celebrities.

So also in dramatic schools—the pupils are taught to recite monologues just as tragedians, held to be celebrated, declaimed them.

It is the same in music. The whole theory of music is nothing but a disconnected repetition of those methods which the acknowledged masters of composition made use of.

I have elsewhere quoted the profound remark of the Russian artist Bryulov on art, but I cannot here refrain from repeating it, because nothing better illustrates what can and what can not be taught in the schools. Once when correcting a pupil's study, Byulóv just touched it in a few places, and the poor dead study immediately became animated. "Why, you only touched it a *wee bit,* and it is quite another thing!" said one of the pupils. "Art begins where the *wee bit* begins," replied Byulóv, indicating by these words just what is most characteristic of art. The remark is true of all the arts, but its justice is particularly noticeable in the performance of music. That musical execution should be artistic, should be art, that is,

should carry infection, three chief conditions must be observed. There are many others needed for musical perfection: the transition from one sound to another must be interrupted or continuous; the sound must increase or diminish steadily; it must be blended with one and not with another sound; the sound must have this or that timbre, and much besides,—but take the three chief conditions: the pitch, the time, and the strength of the sound. Musical execution is only then art, only then infects, when the sound is neither higher nor lower than it should be, that is, when exactly the infinitely small centre of the required note is taken; when that note is continued exactly as long as is needed; and when the strength of the sound is neither more nor less than is required. The slightest deviation of pitch in either direction, the slightest increase or decrease in time, or the slightest strengthening or weakening of the sound beyond what is needed, destroys the perfection and consequently the infectiousness of the work. So that the feeling of infection by the art of music, which seems so simple and so easily obtained, is a thing we receive only when the performer finds those infinitely minute degrees which are necessary to perfection in music. It is the same in all arts: a wee bit lighter, a wee bit darker, a wee bit higher, lower, to the right or the left—in painting; a wee bit weaker or stronger in intonation, a wee bit sooner or later —in dramatic art; a wee bit omitted, over-emphasised, or exaggerated—in poetry, and there is no contagion. Infection is only obtained when an artist finds those infinitely minute degrees of which a work of art consists, and only to the extent to which he finds them. And it is quite impossible to teach people by external means to find these minute degrees: they can only be found when a man yields to his feeling. No instruction can make a dancer catch just the tact of the music, or a singer or a fiddler take exactly the infinitely minute centre of his note, or a sketcher draw of all possible

lines the only right one, or a poet find the only meet arrangement of the only suitable words. All this is found only by feeling. And therefore schools may teach what is necessary in order to produce something resembling art, but not art itself.

The teaching of the schools stops where the *wee bit* begins —consequently where art begins.

Accustoming people to something resembling art, disaccustoms them to the comprehension of real art. And that is how it comes about that none are more dull to art than those who have passed through the professional schools and been most successful in them. Professional schools produce an hypocrisy of art precisely akin to that hypocrisy of religion which is produced by theological colleges for training priests, pastors, and religious teachers generally. As it is impossible in a school to train a man so as to make a religious teacher of him, so it is impossible to teach a man how to become an artist.

Art schools are thus doubly destructive of art: first, in that they destroy the capacity to produce real art in those who have the misfortune to enter them and go through a seven or eight years' course; and secondly, in that they generate enormous quantities of that counterfeit art which perverts the taste of the masses and overflows our world. In order that born artists may know the methods of the various arts elaborated by former artists, there should exist in all elementary schools such classes for drawing and music (singing) that, after passing through them, every talented scholar may, by using existing models accessible to all, be able to perfect himself in his art independently.

These three conditions—the professionalisation of artists, art criticism, and art schools—have had this effect: that most people in our times are quite unable even to understand what art is, and accept as art the grossest counterfeits of it.

CHAPTER XIII

Wagner's "Nibelungen Ring" a type of counterfeit art. Its success, and the reasons thereof.

To what an extent people of our circle and time have lost the capacity to receive real art, and have become accustomed to accept as art things that have nothing in common with it, is best seen from the works of Richard Wagner, which have latterly come to be more and more esteemed not only by the Germans but also by the French and the English as the very highest art revealing new horizons to us.

The peculiarity of Wagner's music, as is known, consists in this, that he considered that music should serve poetry, expressing all the shades of a poetical work.

The union of the drama with music, devised in the fifteenth century in Italy for the revival of what they imagined to have been the ancient Greek music-drama, is an artificial form which had, and has, success only among the upper classes, and among them only when gifted composers such as Mozart, Weber, Rossini, and others, drawing inspiration from a dramatic subject, yielded freely to the inspiration and subordinated the text to the music, so that in their operas the important thing to the audience is merely the music on a certain text, and not the text at all, which latter even when it was utterly absurd, as for instance in the *Magic Flute,* still does not prevent the music from producing an artistic impression.

Wagner wishes to correct the opera by letting music submit to the demands of poetry and unite with it. But each art has its own definite realm, which is not identical with the realm of other arts but merely comes in contact with them; and therefore if the manifestations, I will not say of several but even of

two arts—the dramatic and the musical—be united in one complete production, then the demands of the one art will make it impossible to fulfil the demands of the other, as has always occurred in the ordinary operas, where the dramatic art has submitted to, or rather yielded place to, the musical. Wagner wishes that musical art should submit to dramatic art and that both should appear in full strength. But this is impossible, for every work of art, if it be a true one, is an expression of the intimate feelings of the artist, which are quite peculiar to him and not like anything else. Such is a musical production and such is a dramatic work, if they be true art. And therefore, in order that a production in the one branch of art should coincide with a production in the other branch, it is necessary that the impossible should happen: that two works from different realms of art should be absolutely exceptional, unlike anything that existed before, and yet should coincide and be exactly alike.

And this cannot be, just as there cannot be two men, or even two leaves on a tree, exactly alike. Still less can two works from different realms of art, the musical and the literary, be absolutely alike. If they coincide, then either one is a work of art and the other a counterfeit, or both are counterfeits. Two live leaves cannot be exactly alike but two artificial leaves may be. And so it is with works of art. They can only coincide completely when neither the one nor the other is art, but both are only cunningly devised semblances of it.

If poetry and music may be joined, as occurs in hymns, songs, and *romances*—(though even in these the music does not follow the changes of each verse of the text as Wagner wants to, but the song and the music merely produce a coincident effect on the mind)—this occurs only because lyrical poetry and music have, to some extent, one and the same aim: to produce a mental condition, and the conditions produced

by lyrical poetry and by music can, more or less, coincide. But even in these conjunctions the centre of gravity always lies in one of the two productions, so that it is one of them that produces the artistic impression while the other remains unregarded. And still less is it possible for such union to exist between epic or dramatic poetry and music.

Moreover, one of the chief conditions of artistic creation is the complete freedom of the artist from every kind of preconceived demand. And the necessity of adjusting his musical work to a work from another realm of art is a preconceived demand of such a kind as to destroy all possibility of creative power; and therefore adjusted works of this kind are and must be, as has always happened, not works of art but only imitations of art, like the music of a melodrama, titles of pictures, illustrations to books, and librettos to operas.

And such Wagner's productions are. A confirmation of this is to be seen in the fact that Wagner's new music lacks the chief characteristic of every true work of art, namely, such entirety and completeness that the smallest alteration in its form would disturb the meaning of the whole work. In a true work of art—poem, drama, picture, song, or symphony—it is impossible to extract one line, one scene, one figure, or one bar from its place and put it in another, without infringing the significance of the whole work, just as it is impossible without infringing the life of an organic being to extract an organ from one place and insert it somewhere else. But in the music of Wagner's last period, with the exception of certain parts of little importance which have an independent musical meaning, it is possible to make all kinds of transpositions, putting what was in front behind and *vice versâ,* without altering the musical sense. And the reason why these transpositions do not alter the sense of Wagner's music is because the sense lies in the words and not in the music.

The musical score of Wagner's later operas is like what

would result should one of those versifiers—of whom there are now many, with tongues so broken that they can, on any theme to any rhymes in any rhythm, write verses which sound as if they had a meaning—conceive the idea of illustrating by his verses some symphony or sonata of Beethoven, or some *ballade* of Chopin, in the following manner. To the first bars of one character, he writes verses corresponding in his opinion to those first bars. Next come some bars of a different character, and he also writes verses corresponding in his opinion to them, but with no internal connection with the first verses, and moreover without rhymes and without rhythm. Such a production, without the music, would be exactly parallel in poetry to what Wagner's operas are in music, if heard without the words.

But Wagner is not only a musician, he is also a poet, or both together; and therefore, to judge of Wagner one must know his poetry also—that same poetry which the music has to subserve. The chief poetical production of Wagner is the *Nibelungen Ring*. This work has attained such enormous importance in our time and has such influence on all that now professes to be art, that it is necessary for everyone to-day to have some idea of it. I have carefully read through the four booklets which contain this work, and have drawn up a brief summary of it, which I give in Appendix III. I would strongly advise the reader (if he has not perused the poem itself, which would be the best thing to do) at least to read my account of it, so as to have an idea of this extraordinary work. It is a model work of counterfeit art so gross as to be even ridiculous.

But we are told that it is impossible to judge of Wagner's works without seeing them on the stage. The Second Day of this drama, which as I was told is the best part of the whole work, was given in Moscow last winter and I went to see the performance.

When I arrived the enormous theatre was already filled from top to bottom. There were Grand-Dukes, and the flower of the aristocracy, of the merchant class, of the learned, and of the middle-class official public. Most of them held the libretto, fathoming its meaning. Musicians—some of them elderly, grey-haired men—followed the music, score in hand. Evidently the performance of this work was an event of importance.

I was rather late, but I was told that the short prelude with which the act begins was of slight importance and that it did not matter having missed it. When I arrived, an actor sat on the stage amid decorations intended to represent a cave and before something which was meant to represent a smith's forge. He was dressed in trico tights, with a cloak of skins, wore a wig and an artificial beard, and with white, weak, genteel hands (his easy movements and especially the shape of his stomach and his lack of muscle revealed the actor) beat an impossible sword with an unnatural hammer in a way in which no one ever uses a hammer; and at the same time, opening his mouth in a strange way, he sang something incomprehensible. The music of various instruments accompanied the strange sounds which he emitted. From the libretto one was able to gather that the actor had to represent a powerful dwarf who lived in the cave, and who was forging a sword for Siegfried, whom he had reared. One could tell he was a dwarf by the fact that the actor walked all the time bending the knees of his trico-covered legs. This dwarf, still opening his mouth in the same strange way, long continued to sing or shout. The music meanwhile runs over something strange, like beginnings which are not continued and do not get finished. From the libretto one could learn that the dwarf is telling himself about a ring a giant had obtained and which the dwarf wishes to procure through Siegfried's aid, while

Siegfried wants a good sword, on the forging of which the dwarf is occupied. After this conversation or singing to himself has gone on rather a long time, other sounds are heard in the orchestra, also like something beginning and not finishing, and another actor appears with a horn slung over his shoulder and accompanied by a man running on all fours dressed up as a bear, whom he sets at the smith-dwarf. The latter runs away without unbending the knees of his trico-covered legs. This actor with the horn represented the hero, Siegfried. The sounds which were emitted in the orchestra on the entrance of this actor were intended to represent Siegfried's character and are called Siegfried's *leit-motiv*. And these sounds are repeated each time Siegfried appears. There is one fixed combination of sounds, or *leit-motiv*, for each character, and this *leit-motiv* is repeated every time the person whom it represents appears; and when anyone is mentioned the *motiv* is heard which relates to that person. Moreover each article also has its own *leit-motiv* or chord. There is a *motiv* of the ring, a *motiv* of the helmet, a *motiv* of the apple, a *motiv* of fire, spear, sword, water, etc.; and as soon as the ring, helmet, or apple is mentioned, the *motiv* or chord of the ring, helmet, or apple, is heard. The actor with the horn opens his mouth as unnaturally as the dwarf, and long continues in a chanting voice to shout some words, and in a similar chant Mime (that is the dwarf's name) makes some reply to him. The meaning of this conversation can only be discovered from the libretto; and it is that Siegfried was brought up by the dwarf and therefore, for some reason, hates him and always wishes to kill him. The dwarf has forged a sword for Siegfried, but Siegfried is dissatisfied with it. From a ten-page conversation (by the libretto), lasting half-an-hour and conducted with the same strange openings of the mouth and chantings, it appears that Siegfried's mother gave birth to him in the wood, and

that concerning his father all that is known is that he had a sword which was broken, the pieces of which are in Mime's possession, and that Siegfried does not know fear, and wishes to go out of the wood. Mime however does not want to let him go. During the conversation the music never omits, at the mention of father, sword, etc., to sound the *motiv* of these people and things. After these conversations fresh sounds are heard—those of the god Wotan—and a wanderer appears. This wanderer is the god Wotan. Also dressed up in a wig, and also in tights, this god Wotan, standing in a stupid pose with a spear, thinks proper to recount what Mime must have known before, but what it is necessary to tell the audience. He does not tell it simply, but in the form of riddles which he orders himself to guess, staking his head (one does not know why) that he will guess right. Moreover, whenever the wanderer strikes his spear on the ground, fire comes out of the ground, and in the orchestra the sounds of spear and of fire are heard. The orchestra accompanies the conversation, and the *motivs* of the people and things spoken of are always artfully intermingled. Besides this the music expresses feelings in the most naïve manner: the terrible by sounds in the bass, the frivolous by rapid touches in the treble, and so forth.

The riddles have no meaning except to tell the audience what the *nibelungs* are, what the giants are, what the gods are, and what has happened before. This conversation also is chanted with strangely opened mouths and continues for eight libretto pages, and a correspondingly long time on the stage. After this the wanderer departs and Siegfried returns and talks with Mime for thirteen pages more. There is not a single melody the whole of this time, but merely intertwinings of the *leit-motivs* of the people and things mentioned. The conversation shows that Mime wishes to teach Siegfried fear and that Siegfried does not know what fear is. Having

finished this conversation, Siegfried seizes one of the pieces of what is meant to represent the broken sword, saws it up, puts it on what is meant to represent the forge, melts it, and then forges it and sings: "Heiho! heiho! heiho! Ho! ho! Aha! oho! aha! Heiaho! heiaho! heiaho! Ho! ho! Hahei! hoho! hahei!" and Act I finishes.

Upon the question I had come to the theatre to decide, my mind was fully made up, as surely as on the question of the merits of my lady acquaintance's novel when she read me the scene between the loose-haired maiden in the white dress and the hero with two white dogs and a hat with a feather *à la Guillaume Tell.*

From an author who could compose such spurious scenes, outraging all esthetic feeling, as those which I had witnessed, there was nothing to be hoped; it may safely be decided that all that such an author can write will be bad, because he evidently does not know what a true work of art is. I wished to leave, but the friends I was with asked me to remain, declaring that one could not form an opinion by that one act, and that the second would be better. So I stopped for the second act.

Act II, night. Afterwards dawn. In general the whole piece is crammed with lights, clouds, moonlight, darkness, magic fires, thunder, etc.

The scene represents a wood, and in the wood there is a cave. At the entrance to the cave sits a fourth actor in tights, representing another dwarf. Dawn appears. Enter the god Wotan, again with a spear and again in the guise of a wanderer. Again his sounds, together with fresh sounds of the deepest bass that can be produced. These latter indicate that the dragon is speaking. Wotan awakens the dragon. The same bass sounds are repeated, growing yet deeper and deeper. First the dragon says, "I want to sleep," but afterwards he crawls out of the cave. The dragon is represented

by two men: it is dressed in a green scaly skin, and waves a tail at one end while at the other it opens a kind of crocodile's jaw that is fastened on and from which flames appear. The dragon (who is meant to be dreadful, and may appear so to five-year-old children) utters some words in a terribly bass voice. This is all so stupid, so like what is done in the booth at a fair, that it is surprising that people over seven years of age can witness it seriously; yet thousands of quasi-cultured people sit and attentively hear and see it, and are delighted.

Siegfried with his horn reappears, as does Mime also. In the orchestra the sounds denoting them are emitted, and they talk about whether Siegfried does or does not know fear. Mime goes away, and a scene commences which is intended to be most poetic. Siegfried, in his tights, lies down in a would-be beautiful pose and alternately keeps silent and talks to himself. He ponders, listens to the singing of birds, and desires to imitate them. For this purpose he cuts a reed with his sword and makes a pipe. The dawn grows brighter and brighter; the birds sing. Siegfried tries to imitate the birds. In the orchestra is heard the imitation of birds, alternating with sounds corresponding to the words he speaks. But Siegfried does not succeed with his pipe-playing, so he plays on his horn instead. This scene is unendurable. Of music, that is, of art serving as a means to transmit a state of mind experienced by the author, there is not even a suggestion. There is something that is absolutely unintelligible musically. In a musical sense a hope continually arises, followed by disappointment, as if a musical thought were commenced only to be broken off. If there are something like musical beginnings, these beginnings are so short, so encumbered with complications of harmony and orchestration and with effects of contrast, are so obscure and unfinished, and what is happening on the stage meanwhile

is so abnominably false, that it is difficult even to perceive these musical snatches, let alone to be infected by them. Above all, from the very beginning to the very end and in each note, the author's purpose is so audible and visible that one sees and hears neither Siegfried nor the birds, but only a limited self-opinionated German of bad taste and bad style, who has a most false conception of poetry, and in the rudest and most primitive manner wishes to transmit to me these false and mistaken conceptions of his.

Everyone knows the feeling of distrust and resistance always evoked by an author's evident predetermination. A narrator need only to say in advance, "Prepare to cry," or "to laugh," and you are sure neither to cry nor to laugh. But when you see that an author prescribes emotion at what is not touching but only laughable or disgusting, and when you see moreover that the author is fully assured that he has captivated you, a painfully tormenting feeling results similar to what one would feel if an old, deformed woman put on a ball-dress and smilingly coquetted before you, confident of your approbation. This impression was strengthened by the fact that around me I saw a crowd of three thousand people, who not only patiently witnessed all this absurd nonsense but even considered it their duty to be delighted with it.

I somehow managed to sit out the next scene also, in which the monster appears to the accompaniment of his bass notes intermingled with the *motiv* of Siegfried; but after the fight with the monster, and all the roars, fires, and sword-wavings, I could stand no more of it, and escaped from the theatre with a feeling of repulsion which even now I cannot forget.

Listening to this opera, I involuntarily thought of a respected, wise, educated, country labourer—one, for instance, of those wise and truly religious men whom I know among the peasants,—and I pictured to myself the terrible perplex-

ity such a man would be in were he to witness what I was seeing that evening.

What would he think if he knew of all the labour spent on such a performance, and saw that audience, those great ones of the earth,—old, bald-headed, grey-bearded men, whom he had been accustomed to respect—sit silent and attentive, listening to and looking at all these stupidities for five hours on end? Not to speak of an adult labourer, one can hardly imagine even a child of over seven occupying himself with such a stupid, incoherent fairy tale.

And yet an enormous audience, the cream of the cultured upper classes, sits out five hours of this insane performance, and goes away imagining that by paying tribute to this nonsense it has acquired a fresh right to esteem itself advanced and enlightened.

I speak of the Moscow public. But what is the Moscow public? It is but a hundredth part of that public which while considering itself most highly enlightened, esteems it a merit so to have lost the capacity of being infected by art that not only can it witness this stupid sham without being revolted, but can even take delight in it.

In Bayreuth, where these performances were first given, people who considered themselves finely cultured assembled from the ends of the earth, spent, say, £100 each to see this performance, and for four days running went to see and hear this nonsensical rubbish, sitting it out for six hours each day.

But why did people go, and why do they still go to these performances, and why do they admire them? The question naturally presents itself: How is the success of Wagner's works to be explained?

That success I explain to myself in this way: thanks to his exceptional position in having at his disposal the resources of a king, Wagner was able to command all the

methods for counterfeiting art which have been developed by long usage, and employing these methods with great ability he produced a model work of counterfeit art. The reason why I have selected his work for my illustration is, that in no other counterfeit of art known to me are all the methods by which art is counterfeited—viz., borrowings, imitations, dramatic effects, and interest—so ably and powerfully united.

From the subject borrowed from antiquity, to the clouds and the risings of the sun and moon, Wagner in this work has made use of all that is considered poetic. We have here the sleeping beauty, and nymphs, and subterranean fires, and dwarfs, and battles, and swords, and love, and incest, and a monster, and singing-birds: the whole arsenal of the poetic is brought into action.

Moreover everything is imitative: the decorations are imitated and the costumes are imitated. All is just as, according to the data supplied by archæology, they would have been in antiquity. The very sounds are imitative, for Wagner, who was not destitute of musical talent, invented just such sounds as imitate the strokes of a hammer, the hissing of molten iron, the singing of birds, etc.

Furthermore, in this work everything is in the highest degree striking in its effects and in its peculiarities: its monsters, its magic fires, and its scenes under water; the darkness in which the audience sit, the invisibility of the orchestra, and the hitherto unemployed combinations of harmony.

And besides, it is all interesting. The interest lies not only in the question who will kill whom, and who will marry whom, and who is whose son, and what will happen next?—the interest lies also in the relation of the music to the text. The rolling waves of the Rhine—now how is that to be expressed in music? An evil dwarf appears —how is the music to express an evil dwarf?—and how is it to express the sensuality of this dwarf? How will

bravery, fire, or apples, be expressed in music? How are the *leit-motivs* of the people speaking to be interwoven with the *leit-motivs* of the people and objects about whom they speak? And the music has a further interest. It diverges from all formerly accepted laws, and most unexpected and totally new modulations crop up (as is not only possible but even easy in music having no inner law of its being); the dissonances are new, and are allowed in a new way—and this, too, is interesting.

And it is this poeticality, imitativeness, effectfulness, and interestingness which, thanks to the peculiarities of Wagner's talent and to the advantageous position in which he was placed, are in these productions carried to the highest pitch of perfection, which so act on the spectator, hypnotising him as one would be hypnotised who should listen for several consecutive hours to maniacal ravings pronounced with great oratorical power.

People say, "You cannot judge without having seen Wagner performed at Bayreuth: in the dark, where the orchestra is out of sight concealed under the stage, and where the performance is brought to the highest perfection." And this just proves that we have here no question of art, but one of hypnotism. It is just what the spiritualists say. To convince you of the reality of their apparitions they usually say, "You cannot judge; you must try it, be present at several séances," that is, come and sit silent in the dark for hours together in the same room with semi-sane people and repeat this some ten times over, and you shall see all that we see.

Yes, naturally! Only place yourself in such conditions, and you may see what you will. But this can be still more quickly attained by getting drunk or smoking opium. It is the same when listening to an opera of Wagner's. Sit in the dark for four days in company with people who are not quite normal, and through the auditory nerves subject

your brain to the strongest action of the sounds best adapted to excite it, and you will no doubt be reduced to an abnormal condition and be enchanted by absurdities. But to attain this end you do not even need four days; the five hours during which one "day" is enacted, as in Moscow, are quite enough. Nor are five hours needed; even one hour is enough for people who have no clear conception of what art should be, and who have concluded in advance that what they are going to see is excellent, and that indifference or dissatisfaction with this work will serve as a proof of their inferiority and lack of culture.

I observed the audience present at this representation. The people who led the whole audience and gave the tone to it were those who had previously been hypnotized and who again succumbed to the hypnotic influence to which they were accustomed. These hypnotized people, being in an abnormal condition, were perfectly enraptured. Moreover all the art critics, who lack the capacity to be infected by art and therefore always especially prize works like Wagner's opera where it is all an affair of the intellect, also with much profundity expressed their approval of a work affording such ample material for ratiocination. And following these two groups went that large city crowd (indifferent to art, with their capacity to be infected by it perverted and partly atrophied), headed by the princes, millionaires, and art patrons, who, like sorry harriers, keep close to those who most loudly and decidedly express their opinion.

"Oh yes, certainly! What poetry! Marvellous! Especially the birds!" "Yes, yes! I am quite vanquished!" exclaim these people, repeating in various tones what they have just heard from men whose opinion appears to them authoritative.

If some people do feel insulted by the absurdity and spuriousness of the whole thing, they are timidly silent, as

sober men are timid and silent when surrounded by tipsy people.

And thus, thanks to the masterly skill with which it counterfeits art while having nothing in common with it, a meaningless, coarse, spurious production finds acceptance all over the world, costs millions of roubles to produce, and assists more and more to pervert the taste of people of the upper classes and their conception of art.

CHAPTER XIV

Truths fatal to preconceived views are not readily recognised. Proportion of works of art to counterfeits. Perversion of taste and incapacity to recognise art. Examples.

I KNOW that most men—not only those considered clever, but even those who are very clever, and capable of understanding most difficult scientific, mathematical, or philosophic problems—can very seldom discern even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as to oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions they have formed, perhaps with much difficulty—conclusions of which they are proud, which they have taught to others, and on which they have built their lives. And therefore I have little hope that what I adduce as to the perversion of art and taste in our society will be accepted or even seriously considered. Nevertheless, I must state fully the inevitable conclusion to which my investigation into the question of art has brought me. This investigation has brought me to the conviction that almost all that our society considers to be art, good art, and the whole of art, far from being real and good art and the whole of art, is not even art at all, but only a counterfeit of it. This position, I know, will seem very strange and paradoxical; but if we once acknowledge art to be human activity by means of which some people transmit their feelings to others (and not a service of Beauty, or a manifestation of the Idea, and so forth), we shall inevitably have to admit this further conclusion also. If it is true that art is an activity by means of which one man having experienced a feeling intentionally transmits it to others, then we have inevitably to admit further that of all that among us is termed art (the art of the upper classes)—

of all those novels, stories, dramas, comedies, pictures, sculptures, symphonies, operas, operettas, ballets, etc., which profess to be works of art, scarcely one in a hundred thousand proceeds from an emotion felt by its author, all the rest being but manufactured counterfeits of art, in which borrowing, imitation, effects, and interest, replace the contagion of feeling. That the proportion of real productions of art is to the counterfeits as one to some hundreds of thousands or even more, may be seen by the following calculation. I have read somewhere that the artist painters in Paris alone number 30,000; there will probably be as many in England, as many in Germany, and as many in Russia, Italy, and the smaller states combined. So that in all there will be in Europe, say, 120,000 painters; and there are probably as many musicians and as many literary artists. If these 360,000 individuals produce three works a year each (and many of them produce ten or more), then each year yields over a million so-called works of art. How many then must have been produced in the last ten years, and how many in the whole time since upper-class art broke off from the art of the whole people? Evidently millions. Yet who of all the connoisseurs of art has received impressions from all these pseudo works of art? Not to mention all the labouring classes who have no conception of these productions, even people of the upper classes cannot know one in a thousand of them all, and cannot remember those they have known. These works all appear under the guise of art, produce no impression on anyone (except when they serve as pastimes for the idle crowd of rich people), and vanish utterly.

In reply to this it is usually said that without this enormous number of unsuccessful attempts we should not have the real works of art. But such reasoning is as though a baker, in reply to a reproach that his bread was bad, were to say that if it were not for the hundreds of spoiled loaves

there would not be any well-baked ones. It is true that where there is gold there is also much sand; but that cannot serve as a reason for talking a lot of nonsense in order to say something wise.

We are surrounded by productions considered artistic. Thousands of verses, thousands of poems, thousands of novels, thousands of dramas, thousands of pictures, thousands of musical pieces, follow one after another. All the verses describe love, or nature, or the author's state of mind, and in all of them rhyme and rhythm are observed. All the dramas and comedies are splendidly mounted and are performed by admirably trained actors. All the novels are divided into chapters; all of them describe love, contain effective situations, and correctly describe the details of life. All the symphonies contain *allegro, andante, scherzo,* and *finale;* all consist of modulations and chords, and are played by highly-trained musicians. All the pictures, in gold frames, saliently depict faces and sundry accessories. But among these productions in the various branches of art there is in each branch one among hundreds of thousands not only somewhat better than the rest, but differing from them as a diamond differs from paste. The one is priceless, the others not only have no value but are worse than valueless for they deceive and pervert taste. And yet externally they are, to a man of perverted or atrophied artistic perception, precisely alike.

In our society the difficulty of recognising real works of art is further increased by the fact that the external quality of the work in false productions is not only no worse, but often better, than real ones; the counterfeit is often more effective than the real, and its subject more interesting. How is one to discriminate? How is one to find a production in no way distinguished in externals from hundreds of thousands of others intentionally made precisely to imitate it?

For a country peasant of unperverted taste this is as

easy as it is for an animal of unspoilt scent to follow the trace he needs among a thousand others in wood or forest. The animal unerringly finds what he needs. So also the man, if only his natural qualities have not been perverted, will without fail select from among thousands of objects the real work of art he requires—that infecting him with the feeling experienced by the artist. But it is not so with those whose taste has been perverted by their education and life. The receptive feeling of these people is atrophied, and in valuing artistic productions they must be guided by discussion and study, which discussion and study completely confuse them. So that most people in our society are quite unable to distinguish a work of art from the grossest counterfeit. People sit for whole hours in concert-rooms and theatres listening to the new composers, consider it a duty to read the novels of the famous modern novelists and to look at pictures representing either something incomprehensible or just the very things they see much better in real life; and, above all, they consider it incumbent on them to be enraptured by all this, imagining it all to be art, while at the same time they will pass real works of art by not only without attention, but even with contempt, merely because in their circle these works are not included in the list of works of art.

A few days ago I was returning home from a walk feeling depressed, as sometimes happens. On nearing the house I heard the loud singing of a large choir of peasant women. They were welcoming my daughter, celebrating her return home after her marriage. In this singing, with its cries and clanging of scythes, such a definite feeling of joy cheerfulness and energy was expressed, that without noticing how it infected me I continued on my way towards the house in a better mood and reached home smiling and quite in good spirits. That same evening a visitor, an admirable musician famed for his execution of classical music and

particularly of Beethoven, played us Beethoven's sonata, Opus 101. For the benefit of those who might otherwise attribute my judgment of that sonata of Beethoven to non-comprehension of it, I should mention that whatever other people understand of that sonata and of other productions of Beethoven's later period, I, being very susceptible to music, understand equally. For a long time I used to attune myself to delight in those shapeless improvisations which form the subject-matter of the works of Beethoven's later period, but I had only to consider the question of art seriously, and to compare the impression I received from Beethoven's later works with those pleasant, clear, and strong, musical impressions which are transmitted, for instance, by the melodies of Bach (his arias), Haydn, Mozart, Chopin (when his melodies are not overloaded with complications and ornamentation), and of Beethoven himself in his earlier period, and above all, with the impressions produced by folk-songs,—Italian, Norwegian, or Russian,—by the Hungarian *csárdäs,* and other such simple, clear, and powerful music, and the obscure, almost unhealthy, excitement from Beethoven's later pieces which I had artificially evoked in myself, was immediately destroyed.

On the completion of the performance (though it was noticeable that everyone had become dull) those present, in the accepted manner, warmly praised Beethoven's profound production and did not forget to add that formerly they had not been able to understand that last period of his, but that they now saw he was really then at his very best. And when I ventured to compare the impression made on me by the singing of the peasant women—an impression which had been shared by all who heard it—with the effect of this sonata, the admirers of Beethoven only smiled contemptuously, not considering it necessary to reply to such strange remarks.

But for all that the song of the peasant women was real art transmitting a definite and strong feeling, while the 101st sonata of Beethoven was only an unsuccessful attempt at art, containing no definite feeling and therefore not infectuous.

For my work on art I have this winter read diligently, though with great effort, the celebrated novels and stories, praised by all Europe, written by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, and Kipling. At the same time I chanced on a story in a child's magazine, by a quite unknown writer, which told of the Easter preparations in a poor widow's family. The story tells how the mother managed with difficulty to obtain some wheat-flour, which she poured on the table ready to knead. She then went out to procure some yeast, telling the children not to leave the hut and to take care of the flour. When the mother had gone, some other children ran shouting near the window, calling those in the hut to come to play. The children forgot their mother's warning, ran into the street, and were soon engrossed in the game. The mother, on her return with the yeast, finds a hen on the table throwing the last of the flour to her chickens, who were busily picking it out of the dust of the earthen floor. The mother, in despair, scolds the children, who cry bitterly. And the mother begins to feel pity for them—but the white flour has all gone. So to mend matters she decides to make the Easter cake with sifted rye-flour, brushing it over with white of egg and surrounding it with eggs. "Rye-bread which we bake is as good as a cake," says the mother, using a rhyming proverb to console the children for not having an Easter cake made with white flour. And the children, quickly passing from despair to rapture, repeat the proverb and await the Easter cake more merrily even than before.

Well! the reading of the novels and stories by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, Kipling, and others, handling the most

"THE DAY OF JUDGMENT"

A painting by V. M. Vasnetsóv in Kief Cathedral
An example of a sort of picture Tolstoy disliked

harrowing subjects, did not touch me for one moment, and I was provoked with the authors all the while as one is provoked with a man who considers you so naïve that he does not even conceal the trick by which he intends to take you in. From the first lines you see the intention with which the book is written, the details all become superfluous, and one feels dull. Above all, one knows that the author had no other feeling all the time than a desire to write a story or a novel, and so one receives no artistic impression. On the other hand I could not tear myself away from the unknown author's tale of the children and the chickens, because I was at once infected by the feeling the author had evidently experienced, re-evoked in himself, and transmitted.

Vasnetsóv is one of our Russian painters. He has painted ecclesiastical pictures in Kief Cathedral, and everyone praises him as the founder of some new, elevated kind of Christian art. He worked at those pictures for ten years, was paid tens of thousands of roubles for them, and they are all simply bad imitations of imitations of imitations, destitute of any spark of feeling. And this same Vasnetsóv drew a picture for Turgénev's story "The Quail" (in which it is told how a son pitied a quail that he had seen his father kill) showing the boy asleep with pouting upper lip, and above him, as a dream, the quail. And this picture is a true work of art.

In the English Academy of 1897 two pictures were exhibited together; one of which, by J. C. Dollman, was the temptation of St. Anthony. The Saint is on his knees praying. Behind him stands a naked woman and animals of some kind. It is apparent that the naked woman pleased the artist very much, but that Anthony did not concern him at all; and that so far from the temptation being terrible to him (the artist) it is highly agreeable. And therefore if there be any art in this picture, it is very nasty and false.

Next in the same book of academy pictures comes a picture by Langley, showing a stray beggar boy, who has evidently been called in by a woman who has taken pity on him. The boy, pitifully drawing his bare feet under the bench, is eating; the woman is looking on, probably considering whether he will not want some more; and a girl of about seven, leaning on her arm, is carefully and seriously looking on, not taking her eyes from the hungry boy and evidently understanding for the first time what poverty is, and what inequality among people is, and asking herself why she has everything provided for her while this boy goes barefoot and hungry? She feels sorry and yet pleased. And she loves both the boy and goodness. . . . And one feels that the artist loved this girl, and that she too loves. And this picture, by an artist who, I think, is not very widely known, is an admirable and true work of art.

I remember seeing a performance of *Hamlet* by Rossi. Both the tragedy itself and the performer who took the chief part are considered by our critics to represent the climax of supreme dramatic art. And yet, both from the subject-matter of the drama and from the performance, I experienced all the time that peculiar suffering which is caused by false imitations of works of art. And I lately read of a theatrical performance among a savage tribe—the Voguls. A spectator describes the play. A big Vogul and a little one, both dressed in reindeer skins, represent a reindeer-doe and its young. A third Vogul, with a bow, represents a huntsman on snow-shoes, and a fourth imitates with his voice a bird that warns the reindeer of their danger. The play is that the huntsman follows the track that the doe with its young one has travelled. The deer run off the scene and again reappear. (Such performances take place in a small tent-house.) The huntsman gains more and more on the pursued. The little deer is tired and presses against its mother. The

A sketch illustrating Turgenev's story,
"THE QUAIL"
By V. M. Vasnetsóv

doe stops to draw breath. The hunter comes up with them and draws his bow. But just then the bird sounds its note, warning the deer of their danger. They escape. Again there is a chase and again the hunter gains on them, catches them, and lets fly his arrow. The arrow strikes the young deer. Unable to run, the little one presses against its mother. The mother licks its wound. The hunter draws another arrow. The audience, as the eye-witness describes them, are paralysed with suspense; deep groans and even weeping are heard among them. And from the mere description I felt that this was a true work of art.

What I am saying will be considered irrational paradox at which one can only be amazed; but for all that I must say what I think, namely, that people of our circle, of whom some compose verses, stories, novels, operas, symphonies, and sonatas, paint all kinds of pictures and make statues, while others hear and look at these things, and again others appraise and criticise them all: discuss, condemn, triumph, and generation after generation raise monuments to one another—that all these people, with very few exceptions, artists, and public, and critics, have never (except in childhood and earliest youth, before hearing any discussions on art) experienced that simple feeling familiar to the plainest man and even to a child, that sense of infection with another's feeling—compelling us to rejoice in another's gladness, to sorrow at another's grief, and to mingle souls with another —which is the very essence of art. And therefore these people not only cannot distinguish true works of art from counterfeits, but continually mistake for real art the worst and most artificial, while they do not even perceive works of real art, because the counterfeits are always more ornate, while true art is modest.

CHAPTER XV

The quality of art, considered apart from its subject-matter—*The sign of art: infectiousness. Incomprehensible to those whose taste is perverted. Conditions of infection: Individuality; Clearness; Sincerity.*

ART, in our society, has become so perverted that not only has bad art come to be considered good, but even the very perception of what art really is has been lost. In order to be able to speak about the art of our society it is, therefore, first of all necessary to distinguish art from counterfeit art.

There is one indubitable sign distinguishing real art from its counterfeit—namely, the infectiousness of art. If a man, without exercising effort, and without altering his standpoint, on reading, hearing, or seeing another man's work experiences a mental condition which unites him with that man and with other people who are also affected by that work, then the object evoking that condition is a work of art. And however poetic, realistic, striking, or interesting, a work may be, it is not a work of art if it does not evoke that feeling (quite distinct from all other feelings) of joy and of spiritual union with another (the author) and with others (those who are also infected by it).

It is true that this indication is an *internal* one, and that there are people who have forgotten what the action of real art is, who expect something else from art (in our society the great majority are in this state), and that therefore such people may mistake for this esthetic feeling the feeling of diversion and a certain excitement which they receive from counterfeits of art. But though it is impossible to undeceive these people, just as it may be impossible to convince a man suffering from colour-blindness that green is not red, yet, for all that, this indication remains perfectly definite to those

"CHARITY"

By Walter Langley, British Academy, 1897

whose feeling for art is neither perverted nor atrophied, and it clearly distinguishes the feeling produced by art from all other feelings.

The chief peculiarity of this feeling is that the recipient of a true artistic impression is so united to the artist that he feels as if the work were his own and not someone else's—as if what it expresses were just what he had long been wishing to express. A real work of art destroys, in the consciousness of the recipient, the separation between himself and the artist, nor that alone, but also between himself and all whose minds receive this work of art. In this freeing of our personality from its separation and isolation, in this uniting of it with others, lies the chief characteristic and the great attractive force of art.

If a man is infected by the author's condition of soul, if he feels this emotion and this union with others, then the object which has effected this is art; but if there be no such infection, if there be not this union with the author and with others who are moved by the same work—then it is not art. And not only is infection a sure sign of art, but the degree of infectiousness is also the sole measure of excellence in art.

The stronger the infection the better is the art, as art, speaking now apart from its subject-matter—that is, not considering the quality of the feelings it transmits.

And the degree of the infectiousness of art depends on three conditions:—

(1) On the greater or lesser individuality of the feeling transmitted; (2) on the greater or lesser clearness with which the feeling is transmitted; (3) on the sincerity of the artist, that is, on the greater or lesser force with which the artist himself feels the emotion he transmits.

The more individual the feeling transmitted the more strongly does it act on the recipient; the more individual the

state of soul into which he is transferred the more pleasure does the recipient obtain and therefore the more readily and strongly does he join in it.

The clearness of expression assists infection because the recipient who mingles in consciousness with the author is the better satisfied the more clearly the feeling is transmitted which as it seems to him he has long known and felt and for which he has only now found expression.

But most of all is the degree of infectiousness of art increased by the degree of sincerity in the artist. As soon as the spectator, hearer, or reader, feels that the artist is infected by his own production and writes, sings, or plays, for himself and not merely to act on others, this mental condition of the artist infects the recipient; and, contrariwise, as soon as the spectator, reader, or hearer, feels that the author is not writing, singing, or playing, for his own satisfaction—does not himself feel what he wishes to express—but is doing it for him, the recipient, resistance immediately springs up and the most individual and the newest feelings and the cleverest technique not only fail to produce any infection but actually repel.

I have mentioned three conditions of contagion in art, but they may all be summed up into one, the last, sincerity, that is, that the artist should be impelled by an inner need to express his feeling. That condition includes the first; for if the artist is sincere he will express the feeling as he experienced it. And as each man is different from everyone else, his feeling will be individual for everyone else; and the more individual it is—the more the artist has drawn it from the depths of his nature—the more sympathetic and sincere will it be. And this same sincerity will impel the artist to find a clear expression of the feeling which he wishes to transmit.

Therefore this third condition—sincerity—is the most im-

portant of the three. It is always complied with in peasant art, and this explains why such art always acts so powerfully; but it is a condition almost entirely absent from our upper-class art, which is continually produced by artists actuated by personal aims of covetousness or vanity.

Such are the three conditions which divide art from its counterfeits, and which also decide the quality of every work of art considered apart from its subject-matter.

The absence of any one of these conditions excludes a work from the category of art and relegates it to that of art's counterfeits. If the work does not transmit the artist's peculiarity of feeling and is therefore not individual, if it is unintelligibly expressed, or if it has not proceeded from the author's inner need for expression—it is not a work of art. If all these conditions are present, even in the smallest degree, then the work, even if a weak one, is yet a work of art.

The presence in various degrees of these three conditions: individuality, clearness, and sincerity, decides the merit of a work of art, as art, apart from subject-matter. All works of art take rank of merit according to the degree in which they fulfil the first, the second, and the third of these conditions. In one the individuality of the feeling transmitted may predominate; in another, clearness of expression; in a third, sincerity; while a fourth may have sincerity and individuality but be deficient in clearness; a fifth, individuality and clearness, but less sincerity; and so forth, in all possible degrees and combinations.

Thus is art divided from what is not art, and thus is the quality of art, as art, decided, independently of its subject-matter, that is to say, apart from whether the feelings it transmits are good or bad.

But how are we to define good and bad art with reference to its content or subject-matter?

CHAPTER XVI

The quality of art, considered according to its subject-matter. The bet*ter the feeling the better the art. The cultured crowd. The religious perception of our age. New ideals put fresh demands to art. Art unites. Religious art. Universal art. Both co-operate to one result. The new appraisement of art. Bad art. Examples of art. How to test a work claiming to be art.*

How in art are we to decide what is good and what is bad in subject-matter?

Art, like speech, is a means of communication and therefore of progress, that is, of the movement of humanity forward towards perfection. Speech renders accessible to men of the latest generations all the knowledge discovered by the experience and reflection both of preceding generations and of the best and foremost men of their own times; art renders accessible to men of the latest generations all the feelings experienced by their predecessors, and those also which are felt by their best and foremost contemporaries. And as the evolution of knowledge proceeds by truer and more necessary knowledge dislodging and replacing what is mistaken and unnecessary, so the evolution of feeling proceeds through art, —feelings less kind and less needful for the well-being of mankind being replaced by others kinder and more needful for that end. That is the purpose of art. And, speaking now of its subject-matter, the more art fulfils that purpose the better the art, and the less it fulfils it the worse the art.

And the appraisement of feelings (that is, the acknowledgment of one set of feelings or another as being more or less good, more or less necessary for the well-being of mankind) is made by the religious perception of the age.

In every period of history and in every human society

there exists an understanding of the meaning of life which represents the highest level to which men of that society have attained,—an understanding defining the highest good at which that society aims. This understanding is the religious perception of the given time and society. And this religious perception is always clearly expressed by a few advanced men, and more or less vividly perceived by all the members of the society. Such a religious perception and its corresponding expression exists always in every society. If it appears to us that in our society there is no religious perception, this is not because there really is none but only because we do not want to see it. And we often wish not to see it because it exposes the fact that our life is inconsistent with that religious perception.

Religious perception in a society is like the direction of a flowing river. If the river flows at all, it must have a direction. If a society lives, there must be a religious perception indicating the direction in which, more or less consciously, all its members tend.

And so there always has been and is a religious perception in every society. And it is by the standard of this religious perception that the feelings transmitted by art have always been estimated. It has always been only on the basis of this religious perception of their age that men have chosen, from the endlessly varied spheres of art, that art which transmitted feelings making religious perception operative in actual life. And such art has always been highly valued and encouraged; while art transmitting feelings already outlived, flowing from the antiquated religious perceptions of a former age, has always been condemned and despised. All the rest of art, transmitting those most diverse feelings by means of which people commune with one another, was not condemned, and was tolerated if only it did not transmit feelings contrary to religious perception. Thus for instance among the Greeks,

art transmitting the feeling of beauty, strength, and courage (Hesiod, Homer, Phidias) was chosen, approved, and encouraged; while art transmitting feelings of rude sensuality, despondency, and effeminacy, was condemned and despised. Among the Jews, art transmitting feelings of devotion and submission to the God of the Hebrews and to His will (the epic of Genesis, the prophets, the Psalms) was chosen and encouraged, while art transmitting feelings of idolatry (the golden calf) was condemned and despised. All the rest of art—stories, songs, dances, ornamentation of houses, of utensils, and of clothes—which was not contrary to religious perception, was neither distinguished nor discussed. Thus in regard to its subject-matter has art been appraised always and everywhere and thus it should be appraised, for this attitude towards art proceeds from the fundamental characteristics of human nature and those characteristics do not change.

I know that according to an opinion current in our times religion is a superstition which humanity has outgrown, and it is therefore assumed that no such thing exists as a religious perception common to us all by which art in our time can be estimated. I know that this is the opinion current in the pseudo-cultured circles of to-day. People who do not acknowledge Christianity in its true meaning because it undermines all their social privileges, and who therefore invent all kinds of philosophic and esthetic theories to hide from themselves the meaninglessness and wrongness of their lives, cannot think otherwise. These people intentionally, or sometimes unintentionally, confuse the notion of a religious cult with the notion of religious perception, and think that by denying the cult they get rid of religious perception. But even the very attacks on religion, and the attempts to establish an idea of life contrary to the religious perception of our times, most clearly demonstrate the existence of a religious percep-

tion condemning the lives that are not in harmony with it.

If humanity progresses, that is, moves forward, there must inevitably be a guide to the direction of that movement. And religions have always furnished that guide. All history shows that the progress of humanity is accomplished no otherwise than under the guidance of religion. But if the race cannot progress without the guidance of religion, —and progress is always going on, and consequently also in our own times,—then there must be a religion of our times. So that whether it pleases or displeases the so-called cultured people of to-day, they must admit the existence of religion —not of a religious cult, Catholic, Protestant, or another, but of religious perception—which even in our times is the guide always present where there is any progress. And if a religious perception exists amongst us, then our art should be appraised on the basis of that religious perception; and as has been the case always and everywhere art transmitting feelings flowing from the religious perception of our time should be chosen from amongst all the indifferent art, should be acknowledged, highly valued, and encouraged; while art running counter to that perception should be condemned and despised, and all the remaining indifferent art should neither be distinguished nor encouraged.

The religious perception of our time, in its widest and most practical application, is the consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among men—in their loving harmony with one another. This perception is not only expressed by Christ and all the best men of past ages, it is not only repeated in the most varied forms and from most diverse sides by the best men of our times, but it already serves as a clue to all the complex labour of humanity, consisting, as this labour does, on the one hand in the destruction of physical and moral obstacles

to the union of men, and on the other hand in establishing the principles common to all men which can and should unite them in one universal brotherhood. And it is on the basis of this perception that we should appraise all the phenomena of our life, and among the rest our art also; choosing from all its realms and highly prizing and encouraging whatever transmits feelings flowing from this religious perception, rejecting whatever is contrary to it, and not attributing to the rest of art an importance not properly belonging to it.

The chief mistake made by people of the upper classes at the time of the so-called Renaissance,—a mistake we still perpetuate,—was not that they ceased to value and to attach importance to religious art (people of that period could not attach importance to it because, like our own upper classes, they could not believe in what the majority considered to be religion), but their mistake was that they set up in place of religious art which was lacking, an insignificant art which aimed only at giving pleasure, that is, they began to choose, to value, and to encourage, in place of religious art, something which in any case did not deserve such esteem and encouragement.

One of the Fathers of the Church said that the great evil is not that men do not know God, but that they have set up, instead of God, that which is not God. So also with art. The great misfortune of the people of the upper classes of our time is not so much that they are without a religious art, as that, instead of a supreme religious art chosen from all the rest as being specially important and valuable, they have chosen a most insignificant and, usually, harmful art, which aims at pleasing certain people, and which therefore, if only by its exclusive nature, stands in contradiction to that Christian principle of universal union which forms the religious perception of our time. Instead of religious art,

an empty and often vicious art is set up, and this hides from men's notice the need of that true religious art which should be present in life in order to improve it.

It is true that art which satisfies the demands of the religious perception of our time is quite unlike former art, but, notwithstanding this dissimilarity, to a man who does not intentionally hide the truth from himself what does form the religious art of our age is very clear and definite. In former times, when the highest religious perception united only some people (who even if they formed a large society were yet but one society surrounded by others—Jews, or Athenian or Roman citizens), the feelings transmitted by the art of that time flowed from a desire for the might, greatness, glory, and prosperity of that society, and the heroes of art might be people who contributed to that prosperity by strength, by craft, by fraud, or by cruelty (Ulysses, Jacob, David, Samson, Hercules, and all the heroes). But the religious perception of our times does not select any one society of men; on the contrary it demands the union of all—absolutely of all people without exception—and above every other virtue it sets brotherly love to all men. And therefore the feelings transmitted by the art of our time not only cannot coincide with the feelings transmitted by former art, but must run counter to them.

Christian, truly Christian, art has been so long in establishing itself, and has not yet established itself, just because the Christian religious perception was not one of those small steps by which humanity advances regularly, but was an enormous revolution which, if it has not already altered, must inevitably alter the entire life-conception of mankind, and consequently the whole internal organisation of their life. It is true that the life of humanity, like that of an individual, moves regularly; but in that regular movement come, as it were, turning-points which sharply divide the preceding

from the subsequent life. Christianity was such a turning-point; such at least it must appear to us who live by the Christian perception of life. Christian perception gave another, a new, direction to all human feelings, and therefore completely altered both the content and the significance of art. The Greeks could make use of Persian art and the Romans could use Greek art, or, similarly, the Jews could use Egyptian art,—the fundamental ideals were one and the same. Now the ideal was the greatness and prosperity of the Persians, now the greatness and prosperity of the Greeks, now that of the Romans. The same art was transferred into other conditions and served new nations. But the Christian ideal changed and reversed everything, so that, as the Gospel puts it, "That which was exalted among men has become an abomination in the sight of God." The ideal is no longer the greatness of Pharaoh or of a Roman emperor, not the beauty of a Greek nor the wealth of Phœnicia, but humility, purity, compassion, love. The hero is no longer Dives, but Lazarus the beggar; not Mary Magdalene in the day of her beauty, but in the day of her repentance; not those who acquire wealth, but those who have abandoned it; not those who dwell in palaces, but those who dwell in catacombs and huts; not those who rule over others, but those who acknowledge no authority but God's. And the greatest work of art is no longer a cathedral of victory [1] with statues of conquerors, but the representation of a human soul so transformed by love that a man who is tormented and murdered yet pities and loves his persecutors.

And the change is so great that men of the Christian world find it difficult to resist the inertia of the heathen art to which they have been accustomed all their lives. The subject-matter of Christian religious art is so new to them, so unlike

[1] There is in Moscow a magnificent "Cathedral of our Saviour," erected to commemorate the defeat of the French in the war of 1812.—A. M.

the subject-matter of former art, that it seems to them as though Christian art were a denial of art, and they cling desperately to the old art. But this old art, having no longer in our day any source in religious perception, has lost its meaning, and we shall have to abandon it whether we wish to or not.

The essence of the Christian perception consists in the recognition by every man of his sonship to God, and of the consequent union of men with God and with one another, as is said in the Gospel (John xvii. 21 [1]). Therefore the subject-matter of Christian art is such feeling as can unite men with God and with one another.

The expression *unite men with God and with one another* may seem obscure to people accustomed to the misuse of these words which is so customary, but the words have a perfectly clear meaning nevertheless. They indicate that the Christian union of man (in contradiction to the partial, exclusive union of only some men) is that which unites all without exception.

Art, all art, has this characteristic, that it unites people. Every art causes those to whom the artist's feeling is transmitted to unite in soul with the artist and also with all who receive the same impression. But non-Christian art, while uniting some people, makes that very union a cause of separation between these united people and others; so that union of this kind is often a source not only of division but even of enmity towards others. Such is all patriotic art, with its anthems, poems, and monuments; such is all Church art, that is, the art of certain cults, with their images, statues, processions, and other local ceremonies. Such art is belated and non-Christian, uniting the people of one cult, only to separate them yet more sharply from the members of other cults and even to place them in relations of hostility to one another.

[1] "That they may be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us."

Christian art is such only as tends to unite all without exception, either by evoking in them the perception that each man and all men stand in like relation towards God and towards their neighbour, or by evoking in them identical feelings, which may even be the very simplest provided only that they are not repugnant to Christianity and are natural to everyone without exception.

Good Christian art of our time may be unintelligible to people because of imperfections in its form or because men are inattentive to it, but it must be such that all men can experience the feelings it transmits. It must be the art not of some one group of people, nor of one class, nor of one nationality, nor of one religious cult; that is, it must not transmit feelings which are accessible only to a man educated in a certain way, or only to an aristocrat, or a merchant, or only to a Russian, or a native of Japan, or a Roman Catholic, or a Buddhist, and so on, but it must transmit feelings accessible to everyone. Only art of this kind can be acknowledged in our time to be good art, worthy of being chosen out from all the rest of art and encouraged.

Christian art, that is, the art of our time, should be catholic in the original meaning of the word, that is, universal, and therefore it should unite all men. And only two kinds of feeling do unite all men: first, feelings flowing from the perception of our sonship to God and of the brotherhood of man; and next, the simple feelings of common life accessible to everyone without exception—such as feelings of merriment, of pity, of cheerfulness, of tranquillity, and so forth. Only these two kinds of feelings can now supply material for art good in its subject-matter.

And the action of these two kinds of art, apparently so dissimilar, is one and the same. The feelings flowing from the perception of our sonship to God and of the brotherhood of man—such as a feeling of sureness in truth, devotion to

the will of God, self-sacrifice, respect for and love of man—evoked by Christian religious perception; and the simplest feelings—such as a softened or a merry mood caused by a song or an amusing jest intelligible to everyone, or by a touching story, or a drawing, or a little doll: both alike produce one and the same effect, the loving union of man with man. Sometimes people who are together, if not hostile to one another, are, at least estranged in mood and feeling, till perhaps a story, a performance, a picture, or even a building, but oftenest of all music, unites them all as by an electric flash, and in place of their former isolation or even enmity they are all conscious of union and mutual love. Each is glad that another feels what he feels; glad of the communion established not only between him and all present but also with all now living who will yet share the same impression; and, more than that, he feels the mysterious gladness of a communion which, reaching beyond the grave, unites us with all men of the past who have been moved by the same feelings and with all men of the future who will yet be touched by them. And this effect is produced both by the religious art which transmits feelings of love to God and one's neighbour, and by universal art transmitting the very simplest feelings common to all men.

The art of our time should be appraised differently from former art chiefly in this, that the art of our time, that is, Christian art (basing itself on a religious perception which demands the union of man), excludes from the domain of art good in its subject-matter everything transmitting exclusive feelings, which do not unite but divide men. It relegates such work to the category of art bad in its subject-matter, while on the other hand it includes in the category of art good in subject-matter a section not formerly admitted as deserving to be chosen out and respected, namely, universal art transmitting even the most trifling and simple feelings if only

they are accessible to all men without exception and therefore unite them. Such art cannot, in our time, but be esteemed good, for it attains the end which the religious perception of our time, that is, Christianity, sets before humanity.

Christian art either evokes in men those feelings which, through love of God and of one's neighbour, draw them to closer and ever closer union and make them ready for and capable of such union; or evokes in them those feelings which show them that they are already united in the joys and sorrows of life. And therefore the Christian art of our time can be and is of two kinds: 1) art transmitting feelings flowing from a religious perception of man's position in the world in relation to God and to his neighbour—religious art in the limited meaning of the term; and 2) art transmitting the simplest feelings of common life, but such, always, as are accessible to all men in the whole world—the art of common life—the art of a people—universal art. Only these two kinds of art can be considered good art in our time.

The first, religious art,—transmitting both positive feelings of love to God and one's neighbour, and negative feelings of indignation and horror at the violation of love,—manifests itself chiefly in the form of words, and to some extent also in painting and sculpture: the second kind, universal art, transmitting feelings accessible to all, manifests itself in words, in painting, in sculpture, in dances, in architecture, and, most of all, in music.

If I were asked to give modern examples of each of these kinds of art, then, as examples of the highest art flowing from love of God and man (both of the higher, positive and of the lower, negative kind), in literature I should name *The Robbers* by Schiller; Victor Hugo's *Les Pauvres Gens* and *Les Misérables;* the novels and stories of Dickens—*The Tale of Two Cities, The Christmas Carol, The Chimes,* and others; *Uncle Tom's Cabin:* Dostoevski's works—especially

"A TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION"

A drawing by I. N. Kramskóy

his *Memoirs from the House of Death;* and *Adam Bede* by George Eliot.

In modern painting, strange to say, works of this kind, directly transmitting the Christian feeling of love of God and of one's neighbour, are hardly to be found, especially among the works of the celebrated painters. There are plenty of pictures treating of the Gospel stories; they however, while depicting historical events with great wealth of detail, do not, and cannot, transmit religious feelings not possessed by their painters. There are many pictures treating of the personal feelings of various people, but of pictures representing great deeds of self-sacrifice and Christian love there are very few, and what there are are principally by artists who are not celebrated, and are for the most part not pictures but merely sketches. Such for instance is the drawing by Kramskóy (worth many of his finished pictures), showing a drawing-room with a balcony, past which troops are marching in triumph on their return from the war. On the balcony stands a wet-nurse holding a baby, and a boy. They are admiring the procession of the troops, but the mother, covering her face with a handkerchief, has fallen back on the sofa sobbing. Such also is the picture by Walter Langley to which I have already referred, and such again is a picture by the French artist Morlon, depicting a lifeboat hastening in a heavy storm to the relief of a steamer that is being wrecked. Approaching these in kind are pictures which represent the hard-working peasant with respect and love. Such are the pictures by Millet, and particularly his drawing, "The Man with the Hoe," also pictures in this style by Jules Breton, Lhermitte, Defregger, and others. As examples of pictures evoking indignation and horror at the violation of love to God and man, Gay's picture "Judgment" may serve, and also Leizen-Mayer's "Signing the Death Warrant." But there are very few of this kind also. Anxiety about the technique and the

beauty of the picture for the most part obscures the feeling. For instance, Gérôme's "Pollice Verso" expresses, not so much horror at what is being perpetrated as attraction by the beauty of the spectacle.[1]

To give examples, from the modern art of our upper classes, of art of the second kind, good universal art, or even of the art of a whole people, is yet more difficult, especially in literature and music. If there are some works which by their inner contents might be assigned to this class (such as *Don Quixote,* Molière's comedies, *David Copperfield* and *The Pickwick Papers* by Dickens, Gógol's and Púshkin's tales, and some things of Maupassant's), these works for the most part—from the exceptional nature of the feelings they transmit, and the superfluity of special details of time and locality, and above all on account of the poverty of their subject-matter in comparison with examples of universal ancient art (such, for instance, as the story of Joseph)—are comprehensible only to people of their own circle. That Joseph's brethren, being jealous of his father's affection, sell him to the merchants; that Potiphar's wife wishes to tempt the youth; that having attained the highest station he takes pity on his brothers, including Benjamin the favourite,—these and all the rest are feelings accessible alike to a Russian peasant, a Chinese, an African, a child or an old man, educated or uneducated; and it is all written with such restraint, is so free from any superfluous detail, that the story may be told to any circle and will be equally comprehensible and touching to everyone. But not such are the feelings of Don Quixote or of Molière's heroes (though Molière is perhaps the most universal, and therefore the most excellent, artist of modern times), nor of Pickwick and his friends. These feelings are not common to all men but very exceptional, and therefore to

[1] In this picture the spectators in the Roman Amphitheatre are turning down their thumbs to show that they wish the vanquished gladiator to be killed.—A. M.

"DER SALONTIROLER"

A Society Huntsman

By Franz Defregger

make them contagious the authors have surrounded them with abundant details of time and place. And this abundance of detail makes the stories difficult of comprehension to all people not living within reach of the conditions described by the author.

The author of the novel of Joseph did not need to describe in detail, as would be done nowadays, the blood-stained coat of Joseph, the dwelling and dress of Jacob, the pose and attire of Potiphar's wife, and how adjusting the bracelet on her left arm she said, "Come to me," and so on, because the content of feeling in this novel is so strong that all details except the most essential—such as that Joseph went out into another room to weep—are superfluous and would only hinder the transmission of emotion. And therefore this novel is accessible to all men, touches people of all nations and classes, young and old, and has lasted to our times, and will yet last for thousands of years to come. But strip the best novels of our time of their details, and what will remain?

It is therefore impossible in modern literature to indicate works fully satisfying the demands of universality. Such works as exist are to a great extent spoilt by what is usually called "realism," but would be better termed "provincialism," in art.

In music the same occurs as in verbal art and for similar reasons. In consequence of the poorness of the feeling they contain, the melodies of the modern composers are amazingly empty and insignificant. And to strengthen the impression produced by these empty melodies, the new musicians pile complex modulations on to each trivial melody not only in their own national manner, but also in the way characteristic of their own exclusive circle and particular musical school. Melody—every melody—is free and may be understood of all men; but as soon as it is bound up with a particular harmony, it ceases to be accessible except to people trained to such har-

mony, and it becomes strange, not only to common men of another nationality, but to all who do not belong to the circle whose members have accustomed themselves to certain forms of harmonisation. So that music, like poetry, travels in a vicious circle. Trivial and exclusive melodies, in order to make them attractive, are laden with harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestral complications and thus become yet more exclusive, and far from being universal are not even national, that is, they are not comprehensible to the whole people but only to some people.

In music, besides marches and dances by various composers which satisfy the demands of universal art, one can indicate very few works of this class: Bach's famous violin *aria,* Chopin's nocturne in E flat major, and perhaps a dozen bits (not whole pieces, but parts) selected from the works of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, and Chopin.[1]

Although in painting the same thing is repeated as in poetry and in music—namely, in order to make them more interesting, works weak in conception are surrounded by minutely studied accessories of time and place which give them a temporary and local interest but make them less universal—still in painting more than in the other spheres of art may

[1] While offering as examples of art those that seem to me the best, I attach no special importance to my selection; for, besides being insufficiently informed in all branches of art, I belong to the class of people whose taste has, by false training, been perverted. And therefore my old, inured habits may cause me to err, and I may mistake for absolute merit the impression a work produced on me in my youth. My only purpose in mentioning examples of works of this or that class is to make my meaning clearer, and to show how, with my present views, I understand excellence in art in relation to its subject-matter. I must moreover mention that I consign my own artistic productions to the category of bad art, excepting the story *God sees the Truth but Waits,* which seeks a place in the first class, and *The Prisoner of the Caucasus,* which belongs to the second. —L. T.

(Both the stories mentioned are included in *Twenty-Three Tales* in the Maude Tolstoy "World's Classics" series.—A. M.)

be found works satisfying the demands of universal Christian art; that is to say, there are more works expressing feelings in which all men may participate.

In the arts of painting and sculpture, all pictures and statues in so-called genre style, representations of animals, landscapes and caricatures with subjects comprehensible to everyone, and also all kinds of ornaments, are universal in subject-matter. Such productions in painting and sculpture are very numerous (for instance, china dolls), but for the most part such objects (for instance, ornaments of all kinds) are either not considered to be art or are considered to be art of a low quality. In reality all such objects, if only they transmit a true feeling experienced by the artist and comprehensible to everyone (however insignificant it may seem to us to be), are works of real, good, Christian art.

I fear it will here be urged against me, that having denied that the conception of beauty can supply a standard for works of art, I contradict myself by acknowledging ornaments to be works of good art. The reproach is unjust, for the subject-matter of all kinds of ornamentation consists not in the beauty but in the feeling (of admiration at, and delight in, the combination of lines and colours) which the artist has experienced, and with which he infects the spectator. Art remains what it was and what it must be: nothing but the infection by one man of another or of others with the feelings experienced by the infector. Among those feelings is the feeling of delight at what pleases the sight. Objects pleasing the sight may be such as please a small or a large number of people, or such as please all men. And ornaments for the most part are of the latter kind. A landscape representing a very unusual view, or a genre picture of a special subject, may not please everyone, but ornaments, from Yakútsk ornaments to Greek ones, are intelligible to everyone and evoke a

similar feeling of admiration in all, and therefore this despised kind of art should in Christian society be esteemed far above exceptional pretentious pictures and sculptures.

So that there are only two kinds of good Christian art: all the rest of art not comprised in these two divisions should be acknowledged to be bad art, deserving, not to be encouraged but to be driven out, denied, and despised, as being art not uniting but dividing people. Such in literary art are all novels and poems which transmit ecclesiastical or patriotic feelings and also exclusive feelings pertaining only to the class of the idle rich: such as aristocratic honour, satiety, spleen, pessimism, and refined and vicious feelings flowing from sex-love—quite incomprehensible to the great majority of mankind.

In painting, we must similarly place in the class of bad art all ecclesiastical, patriotic, and exclusive pictures; all pictures representing the amusements and allurements of a rich and idle life; all so-called symbolic pictures, in which the very meaning of the symbol is comprehensible only to the people of a certain circle; and above all pictures with voluptuous subjects—all that odious female nudity which fills all the exhibitions and galleries. And to this class belongs almost all the chamber and opera music of our times,—beginning especially with Beethoven (Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner),—by its subject-matter devoted to the expression of feelings accessible only to people who have developed in themselves an unhealthy nervous irritation evoked by this exclusive, artificial, and complex music.

"What! the *Ninth Symphony* not a good work of art!" I hear exclaimed by indignant voices.

And I reply: Most certainly it is not. All that I have written I have written with the sole purpose of finding a clear and reasonable criterion by which to judge the merits of works

of art. And this criterion, coinciding with the indications of plain and sane sense, indubitably shows me that that symphony of Beethoven's is not a good work of art. Of course, to people educated in the worship of certain productions and of their authors, to people whose taste has been perverted just by being educated in such a worship, the acknowledgment that such a celebrated work is bad is amazing and strange. But how are we to escape the indications of reason and common sense?

Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* is considered a great work of art. To verify its claim to be such I must first ask myself whether this work transmits the highest religious feeling? I reply in the negative, for music in itself cannot transmit those feelings; and therefore I ask myself next, Since this work does not belong to the highest kind of religious art, has it the other characteristic of the good art of our time,—the quality of uniting all men in one common feeling: does it rank as Christian universal art? And again I have no option but to reply in the negative; for not only do I not see how the feelings transmitted by this work could unite people not specially trained to submit themselves to its complex hypnotism, but I am unable to imagine to myself a crowd of normal people who could understand anything of this long, confused, and artificial production, except short snatches which are lost in a sea of what is incomprehensible. And therefore, whether I like it or not, I am compelled to conclude that this work belongs to the rank of bad art. It is curious to note in this connection, that attached to the end of this very symphony is a poem of Schiller's which (though somewhat obscurely) expresses this very thought, namely, that feeling (Schiller speaks only of the feeling of gladness) unites people and evokes love in them. But though this poem is sung at the end of the symphony, the music does not accord with the

thought expressed in the verses; for the music is exclusive and does not unite all men, but unites only a few, dividing them off from the rest of mankind.

And just in this same way, in all branches of art, many and many works considered great by the upper classes of our society will have to be judged. By this one sure criterion we shall have to judge the celebrated *Divine Comedy* and *Jerusalem Delivered,* and a great part of Shakespeare's and Goethe's work, and in painting every representation of miracles, including Raphael's Transfiguration, etc.

Whatever the work may be and however it may have been extolled, we have first to ask whether this work is one of real art or a counterfeit. Having acknowledged, on the basis of the indication of its infectiousness even to a small class of people, that a certain production belongs to the realm of art, it is necessary, on this basis to decide the next question, Does this work belong to the category of bad exclusive art, opposed to religious perception, or to Christian art, uniting people? And having acknowledged a work to belong to real Christian art, we must then, according to whether it transmits the feelings flowing from love to God and man or merely the simple feelings uniting all men, assign it a place in the ranks of religious art or in those of universal art.

Only on the basis of such verification shall we find it possible to select, from the whole mass of what in our society claims to be art, those works which form real, important, necessary spiritual food, and to separate them from all the harmful and useless art and from the counterfeits of art which surround us. Only on the basis of such verification shall we be able to rid ourselves of the pernicious results of harmful art and avail ourselves of that beneficient action which is the purpose of true and good art, and which is indispensable for the spiritual life of man and of humanity.

CHAPTER XVII

Results of absence of true art. Results of perversion of art: labour and lives spent on what is useless and harmful. The abnormal life of the rich. Perplexity of children and plain folk. Confusion of right and wrong. Nietzsche and Redbeard. Superstition, Patriotism, and Sensuality.

ART is one of two organs of human progress. By words man interchanges thoughts, by the forms of art he interchanges feelings, and this with all men not only of the present time but also of the past and the future. It is natural to human beings to employ both these organs of intercommunication and therefore the perversion of either of them must cause evil results to the society in which it occurs. And these results will be of two kinds: first, the absence in that society of the work which should be performed by the organ, and secondly, the harmful activity of the perverted organ. And just these results have shown themselves in our society. The organ of art has been perverted, and therefore the upper classes of society have to a great extent been deprived of the effect that it should have produced. The diffusion in our society of enormous quantities, on the one hand, of those counterfeits of art which only serve to amuse and corrupt people, and on the other hand, of works of insignificant exclusive art, mistaken for the highest art, have perverted most men's capacity to be infected by true works of art, and have thus deprived them of the possibility of experiencing the highest feelings to which mankind has attained, which can only be transmitted from man to man by art.

All the best that has been done in art by man remains strange to people who lack the capacity to be infected by art, and is replaced either by spurious counterfeits of art or

by insignificant art, which they mistake for real art. People of our time and of our society are delighted with Baudelaires, Verlaines, Moréases, Ibsens, and Maeterlincks, in poetry; with Monets, Manets, Puvis de Chavannes, Burne-Joneses, Stucks, and Böcklins in painting; with Wagners, Liszts, Richard Strausses, in music; and they are no longer capable of comprehending either the highest or the simplest art.

In the upper classes, in consequence of this loss of capacity to be infected by works of art, people grow up, are educated and live, lacking the fertilising, improving influence of art, and therefore not only do not advance towards perfection, do not become kinder, but, on the contrary, possessing highly-developed external means of civilization, they yet tend to become continually more savage, more coarse, and more cruel.

Such is the result of the absence from our society of the activity of that essential organ—art. But the consequences of the perverted activity of that organ are yet more harmful. And they are numerous.

The first consequence, plain for all to see, is the enormous expenditure of the labour of working people on things which are not only useless but, for the most part, are harmful; and more than that, the waste of priceless human lives on this unnecessary and harmful business. It is terrible to consider with what intensity and amid what privations, millions of people—who lack time and opportunity to attend to what they and their families urgently require—labour for ten, twelve or fourteen hours on end, and even at night, setting the type for pseudo-artistic books which spread vice among mankind, or working for theatres, concerts, exhibitions, and picture galleries, which for the most part also serve vice; but it is yet more terrible to reflect that lively, kindly children, capable of all that is good, are devoted from their early years to such tasks as these: that for six, eight, or ten hours a day, and for ten or fifteen years, some of them should play scales and ex-

"THE ANGELS AT THE TOMB OF CHRIST"

By E. Manet

An example of a sort of picture Tolstoy disliked

ercises; others should twist their limbs, walk on their toes, and lift their legs above their heads; a third set should sing solfeggios; a fourth set, showing themselves off in all manner of ways, should recite verses; a fifth set should draw from busts or from nude models and paint studies; a sixth set should write compositions according to the rules of certain periods; and that in these occupations, unworthy of a human being, which are often continued long after full maturity, they should waste their physical and mental strength and lose all perception of the meaning of life. It is often said that it is horrible and pitiful to see little acrobats putting their legs over their necks, but it is not less pitiful to see children of ten giving concerts, and it is still worse to see schoolboys of ten who as a preparation for literary work have learnt by heart the exceptions to the Latin grammar. These people not only grow physically and mentally deformed but also morally deformed, and become incapable of doing anything really needed by man. Occupying in society the rôle of amusers of the rich, they lose their sense of human dignity and develop in themselves such a passion for public applause that they are always a prey to an inflated and unsatisfied vanity which grows in them to diseased dimensions, and they expend their mental strength in efforts to obtain satisfaction for this passion. And what is most tragic of all is that these people, who for the sake of art are spoilt for life, not only do not render service to this art, but on the contrary inflict the greatest harm on it. They are taught in academies, schools, and conservatoires, how to counterfeit art, and by learning this they so pervert themselves that they quite lose the capacity to produce works of real art, and become purveyors of that counterfeit, or trivial, or depraved, art which floods our society. This is the first obvious consequence of the perversion of the organ of art.

The second consequence is that the productions of amuse-

ment-art, which are prepared in such terrific quantities by the armies of professional artists, enable the rich people of our times to live the lives they do, lives not only unnatural, but in contradiction to the humane principles these people themselves profess. To live as do the idle rich people, especially the women, far from nature and from animals, in artificial conditions, with muscles atrophied or misdeveloped by gymnastics, and with enfeebled vital energy, would be impossible were it not for what is called art—for this occupation and amusement which hides from them the meaninglessness of their lives and saves them from the dulness that oppresses them. Take from all these people the theatres, concerts, exhibitions, piano-playing, songs, and novels, with which they now fill their time in full confidence that occupation with these things is a very refined, esthetic, and therefore good occupation; take from the patrons of art who buy pictures, assist musicians, and are acquainted with writers, their rôle of protectors of that important matter art, and they will not be able to continue such a life, but will all be eaten up by ennui and spleen, and will become conscious of the meaninglessness and wrongfulness of their present mode of life. Only occupation with what among them is considered art renders it possible for them to continue to live on, infringing all natural conditions, without perceiving the emptiness and cruelty of their lives. And this support afforded to the false manner of life pursued by the rich is the second consequence, and a serious one, of the perversion of art.

The third consequence of the perversion of art is the perplexity produced in the minds of children and plain folk. Among people not perverted by the false theories of our society, among workers and children, there exists a very definite conception of why people should be respected and praised. In the minds of peasants and children the ground for praise or eulogy can only be either physical strength:

Hercules, the heroes and conquerors; or moral, spiritual, strength: Sakya Muni giving up a beautiful wife and a kingdom to save mankind, Christ going to the cross for the truth he professed, and all the martyrs and the saints. Both are understood by peasants and children. They understand that physical strength must be respected, for it compels respect; and the moral strength of goodness an unperverted man cannot fail to respect, because his whole spiritual being draws him towards it. But these people, children and peasants, suddenly perceive that besides those praised, respected, and rewarded for physical or moral strength, there are others who are praised extolled and rewarded much more than the heroes of strength and virtue, merely because they sing well, compose verses, or dance. They see that singers, composers, painters, ballet-dancers, earn millions of roubles and receive more honour than the saints do: and peasants and children are perplexed.

When fifty years had elapsed after Púshkin's death and, simultaneously, the cheap editions of his works began to circulate among the people and a monument was erected to him in Moscow, I received more than a dozen letters from different peasants asking why Púshkin was raised to such dignity? And only the other day a literate [1] man from Sarátov called on me who had evidently gone out of his mind over this very question. He was on his way to Moscow to expose the clergy for having taken part in raising a monument to Mr. Púshkin.

Indeed, one need only imagine to oneself what the state of mind of such a man of the people must be when he learns from such rumours and newspapers as reach him, that the clergy, Government officials, and all the best people in Russia, are triumphantly unveiling a statue to a great man, the bene-

[1] In Russian it is customary to make a distinction between literate and illiterate people, that is, between those who can and those who cannot read. *Literate* in this sense does not imply that the man would speak or write correctly.—A. M.

factor, the pride of Russia—Púshkin, of whom till then he had never heard. On all sides he reads or hears about this, and he naturally supposes that if such honours are rendered to anyone, then without doubt he must have done something extraordinary—either some feat of strength or of goodness. He tries to learn who Púshkin was, and having discovered that Púshkin was neither a hero nor a general but a private person and a writer, he comes to the conclusion that Púshkin must have been a holy man and a teacher of goodness, and he hastens to read or to hear his life and works. But what must be his perplexity when he learns that Púshkin was a man of more than easy morals, who was killed in a duel when attempting to murder another man, and that all his service consisted in writing verses about love, which were often very indecent.

That a hero, or Alexander the Great, or Genghis Khan, or Napoleon, was great, he understands, because any one of them could have crushed him and a thousand like him; that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ, were great he also understands, for he knows and feels that he and all men should be such as they were; but why a man should be great because he wrote verses about the love of women he cannot make out.

A similar perplexity must trouble the brain of a Breton or Normandy peasant who hears that a monument, "*une statue*" (as to the Madonna), is being erected to Baudelaire, and reads, or is told, what the contents of his *Fleurs du Mal* are; or, more amazing still, to Verlaine, when he learns the story of that man's wretched, vicious life, and reads his verses. And what confusion it must cause in the brains of peasants when they learn that some Patti or Taglioni is paid £10,000 for a season, or that a painter gets as much for a picture, or that authors of novels describing love-scenes have received even more than that.

And it is the same with children. I remember how I passed

through this stage of amazement and stupefaction and only reconciled myself to this exaltation of artists to the level of heroes and saints by lowering in my own estimation the importance of moral excellence and by attributing a false, unnatural meaning to works of art. And a similar confusion must occur in the soul of each child and each man of the people when he learns of the strange honours and rewards that are lavished on artists. This is the third consequence of the false relation in which our society stands towards art.

The fourth consequence is that people of the upper classes, more and more frequently encountering the contradictions between beauty and goodness, put the ideal of beauty first, thus freeing themselves from the demands of morality. These people, reversing the rôles, instead of admitting, as is really the case, that the art they serve is an antiquated affair, allege that morality is an antiquated affair which can have no importance for people situated on that high plane of development which they opine that they occupy.

This result of the false relation to art showed itself in our society long ago; but recently, with its prophet Nietzsche and his adherents, and with the decadents and certain English esthetes who coincide with him, it is being expressed with especial impudence. The Decadents, and esthetes of the type at one time represented by Oscar Wilde, select as a theme for their productions the denial of morality and the laudation of vice.

This art has partly generated and partly coincides with a similar philosophic theory. I recently received from America a book entitled *The Survival of the Fittest: Philosophy of Power,* 1896, by Ragner Redbeard, Chicago. The substance of this book, as it is expressed in the editor's preface, is that to measure right by the false philosophy of the Hebrew prophets and weepful Messiahs is madness. Right is not the offspring of doctrine, but of power. All laws, command-

ments, or doctrines as to not doing to another what you do not wish done to you, have no inherent authority whatever, but receive it only from the club, the gallows, and the sword. A man truly free is under no obligation to obey any injunction, human or divine. Obedience is the sign of the degenerate. Disobedience is the stamp of the hero. Men should not be bound by moral rules invented by their foes. The whole world is a slippery battlefield. Ideal justice demands that the vanquished should be exploited, emasculated, and scorned. The free and brave may seize the world. And therefore there should be eternal war for life, for land, for love, for women, for power, and for gold. (Something similar was said a few years ago by the celebrated and refined academician, de Vogüé.) The earth with its treasures is booty for the bold.

The author has evidently by himself, independently of Nietzsche, come to the same conclusions which are professed by the new artists.

Expressed in the form of a doctrine these positions startle us. In reality they are implied in the ideal of art serving beauty. The art of our upper classes has educated people in this ideal of the superman,—which is in reality the old ideal of Nero, Sténka, Rázin,[1] Genghis Khan, Robert Macaire,[2] or Napoleon, and all their accomplices, assistants,

[1] Sténka Rázin was by origin a common Cossack. His brother was hanged for a breach of military discipline, and to this event Sténka Rázin's hatred of the governing classes has been attributed. He formed a robber band, and subsequently headed a formidable rebellion, declaring himself in favour of freedom for the serfs, religious toleration, and the abolition of taxes. Like the Government he opposed, he relied on force, and though he used it largely in defence of the poor against the rich he still held to

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

Like Robin Hood he is favourably treated in popular legends.—A. M.

[2] Robert Macaire is a modern type of adroit and audacious rascality. He was the hero of a popular play produced in Paris in 1834, and of one written by R. L. Stevenson and W. E. Henley, 1897.—A. M.

and adulators,—and it supports this ideal with all its might.

It is this supplanting of the ideal of what is right by the ideal of what is beautiful, that is, of what is pleasant, that is the fourth consequence and a terrible one of the perversion of art in our society. It is fearful to think of what would befall humanity were such art to spread among the masses of the people. And it already begins to spread.

Finally, the fifth and chief result is that the art which flourishes in the upper classes of European society has a directly vitiating influence, infecting people with the worst feelings and with those most harmful to humanity—superstition, patriotism, and, above all, sensuality.

Look carefully into the causes of the ignorance of the masses and you may see that the chief cause does not at all lie in the lack of schools and libraries, as we are accustomed to suppose, but in those superstitions, both ecclesiastical and patriotic, with which the people are saturated and which are unceasingly generated by all the methods of art. Church superstitions are supported and produced by the poetry of prayers, hymns, paintings, by the sculpture of images and of statues, by singing, by organs, by music, by architecture, and even by dramatic art in religious ceremonies. Patriotic superstitions are supported and produced by verses and stories (which are supplied even in schools), by music, by songs, by triumphal processions, by royal meetings, by martial pictures, and by monuments.

Were it not for this continual activity in all departments of art, perpetuating the ecclesiastical and patriotic intoxication and embitterment of the people, the masses would long ere this have attained to true enlightenment.

But it is not only in Church matters and patriotic matters that art depraves; it is art in our time that serves as the chief cause of the perversion of people in the most important question of social life—in their sexual relations. We nearly

all know by our own experience, and those who are fathers and mothers know in the case of their grown-up children also, what fearful mental and physical suffering, what useless waste of strength, people suffer merely as a consequence of dissoluteness in sexual desire.

Since the world began, since the Trojan war which sprang from that same sexual dissoluteness, down to and including the suicides and murders of lovers described in almost every newspaper, a great proportion of the sufferings of the human race have come from this source.

And what is art doing? All art, real and counterfeit, with very few exceptions, is devoted to describing, depicting, and inflaming, sexual love in every shape and form. If one remembers all those novels and their lust-kindling descriptions of love, from the most refined to the grossest, with which the literature of our society overflows; if one only remembers all those pictures and statues representing women's naked bodies, and all sorts of abominations, which are reproduced in illustrations and advertisements; if one only remembers all the filthy operas and operettas, songs and ballads, with which our world teems, involuntarily it seems as if existing art had but one definite aim—to disseminate vice as widely as possible.

Such are the most direct though not all the consequences of that perversion of art which has occurred in our society. So that what in our society is called art not only does not conduce to the progress of mankind, but more than almost anything else hinders the attainment of goodness in our lives.

And therefore the question which involuntarily presents itself to every man free from artistic activity and not bound to existing art by self-interest, the question asked by me at the beginning of this work: Is it just that to what we call art, to a something possessed by but a small section of society, should be offered up such sacrifices of human labour, of hu-

man lives, and of goodness, as are now being offered up? receives the natural reply: No; it is unjust, and these things should not be! Such is also the answer of sound sense and unperverted moral feeling. Not only should these things not be, not only should no sacrifices be offered up to what among us is called art, but, on the contrary, the efforts of those who wish to live rightly should be directed towards the destruction of this art, for it is one of the most cruel of the evils that harass our section of humanity. So that were the question put: Would it be preferable for our Christian world to be deprived of *all* that is now esteemed to be art, and together with the false to lose *all* that is good in it? I think that every reasonable and moral man would again decide the question as Plato decided it for his *Republic,* and as all the early Church-Christian and Mahommedan teachers of mankind decided it, that is, would say, Rather let there be no art at all than continue the depraving art, or simulation of art, which now exists. Happily no one has to face this question and no one need adopt either solution. All that man can do, and that we—the so-called educated people who are so placed that we have the possibility of understanding the meaning of the phenomena of our life—can and should do, is to understand the error we are involved in, and not harden our hearts in it, out seek for a way of escape.

CHAPTER XVIII

The purpose of human life is the brotherly union of man. Art must be guided by this perception.

The cause of the lie into which the art of our society has fallen was that people of the upper classes, having ceased to believe in the Church teaching (called Christian), did not resolve to accept true Christian teaching in its real and fundamental principles of sonship to God and brotherhood to man, but continued to live on without any belief, endeavouring to make up for the absence of belief—some by hypocrisy, pretending still to believe in the nonsense of the Church creeds; others by boldly asserting their disbelief; others by refined agnosticism; and others, again, by returning to the Greek worship of beauty, proclaiming egotism to be right, and elevating it to the rank of a religious doctrine.

The cause of the malady was the non-acceptance of Christ's teaching in its real, that is, its full, meaning. And the only cure lies in acknowledging that teaching in its full meaning. Such acknowledgement in our time is not only possible but inevitable. Already to-day a man standing on the height of the knowledge of our age, whether he be nominally a Catholic or a Protestant, cannot say that he really believes in the dogmas of the Church: in God being a Trinity, in Christ being God, in the Scheme of Redemption, and so forth; nor can he satisfy himself by proclaiming his unbelief or scepticism, nor by relapsing into the worship of beauty and egotism. Above all he can no longer say that we do not know the real meaning of Christ's teaching. That meaning has not only become accessible to all men of our times, but the whole life

of man to-day is permeated by the spirit of that teaching and consciously or unconsciously is guided by it.

However differently in form people belonging to our Christian world may define the destiny of man: whether they see it in human progress (in whatever sense of the words), in the union of all men in a socialistic realm, or in the establishment of a commune; whether they look forward to the union of mankind under the guidance of one universal Church, or to the federation of the world—however various in form their definitions of the destination of human life may be, all men in our times already admit that the highest well-being attainable by men is to be reached by their union with one another.

However people of our upper classes (feeling that their ascendency can only be maintained as long as they separate themselves—the rich and learned—from the labourers, the poor, and the unlearned) may seek to devise new conceptions of life by which their privileges may be perpetuated—now the ideal of returning to antiquity, now mysticism, now Hellenism, now the cult of the superior person (supermanism)—they have, willingly or unwillingly, to admit the truth which is becoming clear upon all sides voluntarily and involuntarily, namely, that our welfare lies only in the union and brotherhood of man.

Unconsciously this truth is confirmed by the construction of means of communication,—telegraphs, telephones, the press, and the ever-increasing attainability of material well-being for everyone—and consciously it is affirmed by the destruction of superstitions which divide men, by the diffusion of the truths of knowledge, and by the expression of the ideal of the brotherhood of man in the best works of art of our time.

Art is a spiritual organ of human life which cannot be destroyed, and therefore, notwithstanding all the efforts made by people of the upper classes to conceal the religious ideal by which humanity lives, that ideal is more and more clearly rec-

ognised by man, and even in our perverted society is more and more often partially expressed by science and by art. During the present century works of the higher kind of religious art, permeated by a truly Christian spirit, have appeared more and more frequently both in literature and in painting, as also works of the universal art of common life accessible to all. So that even art knows the true ideal of our times and tends towards it. On the one hand, the best works of art of our time transmit religious feelings urging towards the union and the brotherhood of man (such are the works of Dickens, Hugo, Dostoevski; and, in painting, of Millet, Bastien Lepage, Jules Breton, Lhermitte, and others); on the other hand, they strive towards the transmission, not of feelings which are natural to people of the upper classes only, but of such feelings as may unite everyone without exception. There are as yet few such works, but the need of them is already acknowledged. In recent times we also meet more and more frequently with attempts at publications, pictures, concerts, and theatres, for the people. All this is still very far from accomplishing what should be done, but already the direction in which good art instinctively presses forward to regain the path natural to it can be discerned.

The religious perception of our time—which consists in acknowledging that the aim of life (both collective and individual) is the union of mankind—is already so sufficiently distinct that people have now only to reject the false theory of beauty, according to which enjoyment is considered to be the purpose of art, and religious perception will naturally take its place as the guide of the art of our time.

And as soon as this religious perception which already unconsciously directs the life of man is consciously acknowledged, then immediately and naturally the division of art into art for the lower and art for the upper classes will disappear. There will be one common, brotherly, universal art; and then

first, that art will naturally be rejected which transmits feelings incompatible with the religious perception of our time—feelings which do not unite, but divide men—and later that insignificant, exclusive art will be rejected to which an unmerited importance is now attributed.

And as soon as this occurs, art will immediately cease to be, what it has been in recent times, a means of making people coarser and more vicious, and it will become what it always used to be and should be, a means by which humanity progresses towards unity and blessedness.

Strange as the comparison may sound, what has happened to the art of our circle and time is what happens to a woman who sells her womanly attractiveness, intended for maternity, for the pleasure of those who desire such pleasures.

The art of our time and of our circle has become a prostitute. And this comparison holds good even in minute details. Like her it is not limited to certain times, like her it is always adorned, like her it is always saleable, and like her it is enticing and ruinous.

A real work of art can only arise in the soul of an artist occasionally, as the fruit of the life he has lived, just as a child is conceived by its mother. But counterfeit art is produced by artisans and handicraftsmen continually, if only consumers can be found.

Real art, like the wife of an affectionate husband, needs no ornaments. But counterfeit art, like a prostitute, must always be decked out.

The cause of the production of real art is the artist's inner need to express a feeling that has accumulated, just as for a mother the cause of sexual conception was love. The cause of counterfeit art, as of prostitution, is gain.

The consequence of true art is the introduction of a new feeling into the intercourse of life, as the consequence of a wife's love is the birth of a new man into life.

The consequences of counterfeit art are the perversion of man, pleasure which never satisfies, and the weakening of man's spiritual strength.

And this is what people of our day and of our circle should understand, in order to avoid the filthy torrent of depraved and prostituted art with which we are deluged.

CHAPTER XIX

The art of the future not the possession of a select minority, but a means towards perfection and unity.

People talk of the art of the future, meaning by art of the future some especially refined new art which they imagine will be developed out of that exclusive art of one class which is now considered the highest art. But no such new art of the future can or will be found. Our exclusive art, that of the upper classes of Christendom, has found its way into a blind alley. The direction in which it has been going leads nowhere. Having once let go of that which is most essential for art (namely, the guidance given by religious perception), that art has become ever more and more exclusive and therefore ever more and more perverted, until finally it has come to nothing. The art of the future, that which is really coming, will not be a development of present-day art but will arise on completely other and new foundations having nothing in common with those by which our present art of the upper classes is guided.

Art of the future, that is to say, such part of art as shall be chosen from among all the art diffused among mankind, will consist, not in transmitting feelings accessible only to members of the rich classes as is the case to-day, but in transmitting feelings that embody the highest religious perception of our times. Only those productions will be considered art which transmit feelings drawing men together in brotherly union, or such universal feelings as can unite all men. Only such art will be chosen, tolerated, approved,

and diffused. But art transmitting feelings flowing from antiquated, worn-out religious teaching,—ecclesiastical art, patriotic art, voluptuous art, transmitting feelings of superstitious fear, of pride, of vanity, of ecstatic admiration of national heroes,—art exciting exclusive love of one's own people, or sensuality, will be considered bad, harmful art, and will be censured and despised by public opinion. All the rest of art, transmitting feelings accessible only to a section of people, will be considered unimportant and will be neither blamed nor praised. And the appraisement of art in general will devolve, not as is now the case on a separate class of rich people, but on the whole people; so that for a work to be thought good, and to be approved and diffused, it will have to satisfy the demands, not of a few people living under similar and often unnatural conditions but of all those great masses of people who undergo the natural conditions of laborious life.

Nor will the artists producing the art be, as now, merely a few people selected from a small section of the nation, members of the upper classes or their hangers-on, but they will consist of all those gifted members of the whole people who prove capable of, and have a leaning towards, artistic activity.

Artistic activity will then be accessible to all men. It will become accessible to the whole people because (in the first place) in the art of the future not only will that complex technique which deforms the productions of the art of to-day and requires so great an effort and expenditure of time not be demanded, but on the contrary the demand will be for clearness, simplicity, and brevity—conditions brought about not by mechanical methods but through the education of taste. And secondly, artistic activity will become accessible to all men of the people because, instead of the present professional schools which only some can enter, all will learn music and graphic art (singing and drawing) equally with letters, in the ele-

mentary schools, in such a way that every man, having received the first principles of drawing and music and feeling a capacity for, and a call to, one or other of the arts, will be able to perfect himself in it.

People think that if there are no special art-schools the technique of art will deteriorate. Undoubtedly if by technique we understand those *complexities* of art which are now considered an excellence, it will deteriorate; but if by technique is understood clearness, beauty, simplicity, and compression, in works of art, then even if the elements of drawing and music were not to be taught in the national schools, the technique will not only not deteriorate but, as is shown by all peasant art, will be a hundred times better. It will be improved because all the artists of genius now hidden among the masses will become producers of art and supply models of excellence which (as has always been the case) will be the best schools of technique for their successors. For every true artist even now learns his technique chiefly, not in the schools, but in life, from the examples of the great masters; then—when art will be produced by the best artists of the whole nation and there will be more such examples and they will be more accessible—such part of school training as the future artist will lose will be a hundredfold compensated for by the training he will receive from the numerous examples of good art diffused in society.

Such will be one difference between present and future art. Another difference will be that art will not be produced by professional artists receiving payment for their work and engaged on nothing else besides their art. The art of the future will be produced by all the members of the community who feel the need of such activity, but they will occupy themselves with art only when they feel such need.

In our society people think that an artist will work better and produce more if he has a secured maintenance. And

this opinion would prove once more quite clearly, were such proof yet needed, that what among us is considered art is not art but only a counterfeit. It is quite true that for the production of boots or loaves division of labour is very advantageous, and that the bootmaker or baker who need not prepare his own dinner or fetch his own fuel will make more boots or loaves than if he had to busy himself with these matters. But art is not a handicraft; it is the transmission of feeling the artist has experienced. And sound feeling can only be engendered in a man when he is living in all respects a life natural and proper to man. And therefore security of maintenance is a condition most harmful to an artist's true productiveness, since it removes him from the condition natural to all men—that of struggle with nature for the maintenance of both his own life and that of others—and thus deprives him of the opportunity and the possibility of experiencing the most important and most natural feelings of man. There is no position more injurious to an artist's productiveness than that position of complete security and luxury in which artists usually live in our society.

The artist of the future will live the common life of man, earning his subsistence by some kind of labour. The fruits of that highest spiritual strength which passes through him he will try to share with the greatest possible number of people, for in such transmission to others of the feelings that have arisen in him he will find his happiness and reward. The artist of the future will be unable to understand how an artist, whose chief delight is in the wide diffusion of his works, could give them only in exchange for a certain payment.

Until the dealers are driven out, the temple of art will not be a temple. But the art of the future will drive them out.

And therefore the subject-matter of the art of the future, as I imagine it to myself, will be totally unlike that of to-day.

It will consist, not in the expression of exclusive feelings: pride, spleen, satiety, and all possible forms of voluptuousness, available and interesting only to people who have freed themselves by force from the labour natural to human beings; but it will consist in the expression of feelings flowing from the religious perception of our times, or open to all men without exception and experienced by a man living a life natural to all men.

To people of our circle who do not know and cannot or will not understand the feelings which will form the subject-matter of the art of the future, such subject-matter appears very poor in comparison with those subtleties of exclusive art with which they are now occupied. "What is there fresh to be said about the Christian feeling of love to one's fellow-man?" "The feelings common to everyone are so insignificant and monotonous," think they. And yet in our time the really fresh feelings can only be religious, Christian feelings, and such as are open and accessible to all. The feelings flowing from the religious perception of our times, Christian feelings, are infinitely new and varied, only not in the sense some people imagine,—not because they can be evoked by depicting Christ and Gospel episodes or by repeating in new forms the Christian truths of unity, brotherhood, equality, and love,—but because all the oldest, commonest, and most hackneyed phenomena of life evoke the newest, most unexpected and poignant emotions as soon as a man regards them from the Christian point of view.

What can be older than the relations between married couples, of parents to children, of children to parents; the relations of men to their fellow-countrymen and to foreigners, to an invasion, to defence, to property, to the land, or to animals? But as soon as a man regards these matters from the Christian point of view, endlessly varied, fresh, complex, and strong emotions immediately arise.

And in the same way, that realm of subject-matter for the art of the future which relates to the simplest feelings of common life open to all will not be narrowed but widened. In our former art only the expression of feelings natural to people of a certain exceptional position was considered worthy of being transmitted by art, and even then only on condition that these feelings were transmitted in a most refined manner, incomprehensible to the majority of men; all the immense realm of folk-art and children's art—jests, proverbs, riddles, songs, dances, children's games, and mimicry—was not esteemed a domain worthy of art.

The artist of the future will understand that to compose a fairy-tale, a touching little song, a lullaby or an entertaining riddle, an amusing jest, or to draw a sketch which will delight dozens of generations or millions of children and adults, is incomparably more important and more fruitful than to compose a novel or a symphony, or paint a picture, which will divert some members of the wealthy classes for a short time and then for ever be forgotten. The region of this art of the simple feelings accessible to all is enormous and it is as yet almost untouched.

The art of the future therefore will not be poorer but infinitely richer in subject-matter. And the form of the art of the future will also not be inferior to the present forms but infinitely superior. Superior, not in the sense of having a refined and complex technique, but in the sense of the capacity briefly, simply, and clearly to transmit, without any superfluities, the feeling the artist has experienced and wishes to transmit.

I remember once speaking to a famous astronomer who had given public lectures on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way, and saying it would be a good thing if, with his knowledge and masterly delivery, he would give a lecture merely on the formation and movements of the earth,

for certainly there were many people at his lectures on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way, especially among the women, who did not well know why night follows day and summer follows winter. The wise astronomer smiled as he answered, "Yes, it would be a good thing, but it would be very difficult. To lecture on the spectrum analysis of the Milky Way is far easier."

And so it is in art. To write a rhymed poem dealing with the times of Cleopatra, or paint a picture of Nero burning Rome, or compose a symphony in the manner of Brahms or Richard Strauss, or an opera like Wagner's, is far easier than to tell a simple story without any unnecessary details yet so that it shall transmit the feelings of the narrator, or to draw a pencil-sketch which should touch or amuse the beholder, or to compose four bars of clear and simple melody without any accompaniment, which should convey an impression and be remembered by those who hear it.

"It is impossible to us, with our culture, to return to a primitive state," say the artists of our time. "It is impossible for us now to write such stories as that of Joseph or the Odyssey, to produce such statues as the Venus of Milo, or to compose such music as the folk-songs."

And indeed for the artists of our society and day it is impossible, but not for the future artist who will be free from all the perversion of technical improvements hiding the absence of subject-matter, and who, not being a professional artist, and receiving no payment for his activity, will only produce art when he feels impelled to do so by an irresistible inner impulse.

The art of the future will thus be completely distinct, both in subject-matter and in form, from what is now called art. The only subject-matter of the art of the future will be either feelings drawing men towards union, or such as already unite them; and the forms of art will be such as will be open to

everyone. And therefore the ideal of excellence in the future will not be exclusiveness of feeling, accessible only to some, but, on the contrary, its universality. And not bulkiness, obscurity, and complexity of form, which are now valued, but, on the contrary, brevity, clearness, and simplicity of expression. Only when art has attained to that, will it neither divert nor deprave men as it does now, calling on them to expend their best strength on it, but be what it should be—a vehicle wherewith to transmit religious, Christian perception from the realm of reason and intellect into that of feeling, and really drawing people in actual life nearer to the perfection and unity indicated to them by their religious perception.

CHAPTER XX

The connection between science and art. The mendacious sciences; the trivial sciences. Science should deal with the great problems of human life, and serve as a basis for art.

CONCLUSION

I HAVE accomplished, to the best of my ability, this work which has occupied me for fifteen years, on a subject near to me—that of art. By saying that this subject has occupied me for fifteen years, I do not mean that I have been writing this book fifteen years, but only that I began to write on art fifteen years ago, thinking that when once I undertook the task I should be able to accomplish it without a break. It proved however that my views on the matter then were so far from clear that I could not arrange them in a way that satisfied me. From that time I have never ceased to think on the subject, and I have recommenced writing on it six or seven times; but each time, after writing a considerable part of it, I have found myself unable to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion and have had to put it aside. Now I have finished it; and however badly I may have performed the task, my hope is that my fundamental thought on the false direction the art of our society has taken and is following, on the reasons of this, and on the real destination of art, is correct, and that therefore my work will not be without avail. But that this should come to pass, and that art should really abandon its false path and take the new direction, it is necessary that another equally important spiritual human activity —science—in intimate dependence on which art always rests, should abandon the false path which it too, like art, is following.

Science and art are as closely bound together as the lungs and the heart, so that if the one organ is vitiated the other cannot act rightly.

True science investigates and brings to human perception such truths and such knowledge as the people of a given time and society consider most important. Art transmits these truths from the region of perception to the region of emotion. If therefore the path chosen by science be false so also will be the path taken by art. Science and art are like a certain kind of barge with kedge-anchors which used to ply on our rivers. Science, like the boats which took the anchors upstream and made them secure, gives direction to the forward movement; while art, like the windlass worked on the barge to draw it towards the anchor, causes the actual progression. And thus a false activity of science inevitably causes a correspondingly false activity of art.

As art in general is the transmission of every kind of feeling, but in the limited sense of the word we call nothing art unless it transmits feelings acknowledged by us to be important, so also science in general is the transmission of all possible knowledge, but in the limited sense of the word we give the name of science to that which transmits knowledge admitted by us to be important.

And the degree of importance, both of the feelings transmitted by art and of the information transmitted by science, is decided by the religious perception of the given time and society, that is, by the common understanding of the purpose of their lives possessed by the people of that time or society.

What most of all contributes to the fulfilment of that purpose will be studied most; what contributes less will be studied less; what does not contribute at all to the fulfilment of the purpose of human life will be entirely neglected or, if studied, such study will not be accounted science. So it always has been and so it should be now, for such is the

nature of human knowledge and of human life. But the science of the upper classes of our time, which not only does not acknowledge any religion, but considers every religion to be mere superstition, could not and cannot make such distinctions.

Scientists of our day affirm that they study *everything* impartially; but as everything is too much, is in fact an infinite number of objects, and it is impossible to study all alike, this is only said in theory, while in practice not everything is studied, and study is applied far from impartially—only that being studied which, on the one hand, is most wanted by, and on the other hand, is pleasantest to, those people who occupy themselves with science. And what the members of the upper classes who are occupying themselves with science most want is the maintenance of the system under which those classes retain their privileges; and what is pleasantest are such things as satisfy idle curiosity, do not demand great mental effort, and can be practically applied.

And therefore one side of science, including theology and philosophy adapted to the existing order, as also history and political economy of the same sort, are chiefly occupied in proving that the existing order is the very one which ought to endure; that it has come into existence and continues to exist by the operation of immutable laws not amenable to human will, and that all efforts to change it are therefore harmful and wrong. The other part, experimental science—including mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, physics, botany, and all the natural sciences—is exclusively occupied with things that have no direct relation to the purpose of human life: with what is curious, and with things of which practical application advantageous to people of the upper classes can be made. And to justify that selection of objects of study which (in conformity with their own position) the men of science of our times have made, they have devised a theory

of science for science's sake, quite similar to the theory of art for art's sake.

As by the theory of art for art's sake it appears that occupation with all those things that please us—is art, so, by the theory of science for science's sake, the study of that which interests us—is science.

So that one side of science, instead of studying how people should live in order to fulfil their mission in life, demonstrates the righteousness and immutability of the bad and false arrangements of life which exist around us; while the other part, experimental science, occupies itself with questions of simple curiosity or with technical improvements.

The first of these divisions of science is harmful, not only because it confuses people's perceptions and gives false decisions, but also by its mere existence, occupying the ground which should belong to true science. It does this harm, that every man, in order to approach the study of the most important questions of life, must first refute these erections of lies which have for ages been piled around each of the most essential questions of human life, and which are propped up by all the strength of human ingenuity.

The second division—the one of which modern science is so particularly proud, and which is considered by many people to be the only real science—is harmful in that it diverts attention from the really important subjects to insignificant subjects, and is also directly harmful in that, under the evil system of society which the first division of science justifies and supports, a great part of the technical gains of science are turned not to the advantage but to the injury of mankind.

Indeed, it is only to those who are devoting their lives to such study that it seems as if all the inventions which are made in the sphere of natural science were very important and useful things. And to these people it seems so only

when they do not look around them and do not see what is really important. They only need tear themselves away from the psychological microscope under which they examine the objects of their study, and look about them, in order to see how insignificant is all that has afforded them such naïve pride, all that knowledge not only of geometry of n-dimensions, spectrum analysis of the Milky Way, form of atoms, dimensions of human skulls of the Stone Age, and similar trifles, but even our knowledge of micro-organisms, X-rays, and so forth, in comparison with such knowledge as we have thrown aside and handed over to the perversions of the professors of theology, jurisprudence, political economy, financial science, etc. We need only look around us to perceive that the activity proper to real science is not the study of whatever happens to interest us, but the study of how man's life should be established,—the study of those questions of religion, morality, and social life, without the solution of which all our knowledge of nature will be harmful or insignificant.

We are highly delighted and very proud that our science renders it possible to utilise the energy of a waterfall and make it work in factories, or that we have pierced tunnels through mountains, and so forth. But the pity of it is that we make the force of the waterfall labour, not for the benefit of the workmen but to enrich capitalists who produce articles of luxury or weapons of man-destroying war. The same dynamite with which we blast the mountains to pierce tunnels, we use for wars, which latter we not only do not intend to abstain from but consider inevitable, and unceasingly prepare for.

If we are now able to inoculate preventatively with diphtheritic microbes, to find a needle in a body by means of X-rays, to straighten a hunchback, cure syphilis, and perform wonderful operations, we should not be proud of these acqui-

sitions (even were they all established beyond dispute) if we fully understood the true purpose of real science. If but one-tenth of the efforts now spent on objects of pure curiosity or of merely practical application were expended on real science organising the life of man, more than half the people now sick would not have the illnesses from which a small minority of them get cured in hospitals. There would be no poor-blooded and deformed children growing up in factories, no death-rates, as now, of 50 per cent. among children, no deterioration of whole generations, no prostitution, no syphilis, and no murdering of hundreds of thousands in wars, nor those horrors of folly and of misery which our present science considers a necessary condition of human life.

We have so perverted the conception of science that it seems strange to men of our day to allude to sciences which should prevent the mortality of children, prostitution, syphilis, the deterioration of whole generations, and the wholesale murder of men. It seems to us that science is only then real science when a man in a laboratory pours liquids from one jar into another, or analyses the spectrum, or cuts up frogs and porpoises, or weaves in a specialised scientific jargon an obscure network of conventional phrases—theological, philosophical, historical, juridical, or politico-economical—semi-intelligible to the man himself and intended to demonstrate that what now is, is what should be.

But science, true science,—such science as would really deserve the respect which is now claimed by the followers of one (the least important) part of science,—is not at all of this kind: real science lies in knowing what we should and what we should not believe, in knowing how the associated life of man should and should not be constituted: how to treat sexual relations, how to educate children, how to use the land, how to cultivate it oneself without oppressing other peo-

ple, how to treat foreigners, how to treat animals, and much more that is important for the life of man.

Such has true science ever been and such it should be. And such science is springing up in our times; but, on the one hand, such true science is denied and refuted by all those scientific people who defend the existing order of society, and, on the other hand, it is considered empty, unnecessary, unscientific science by those who are engrossed in experimental science.

For instance, books and sermons appear, demonstrating the antiquatedness and absurdity of Church dogmas, as well as the necessity of making clear the reasonable religious perception suitable to our times, and all the theology that is held to be real science is only engaged in refuting these works and in exercising human intelligence again and again upon finding support and justification for superstitions long since out-lived, which have now become quite meaningless. Or a sermon appears showing that land should not be an object of private possession and that the institution of private property in land is a chief cause of the poverty of the masses. Apparently science, real science, should welcome such a sermon and draw further deductions from this position. But the science of our times does nothing of the kind: on the contrary, political economy demonstrates the opposite position, namely, that landed property, like every other form of property, must be more and more concentrated in the hands of a small number of owners. Again, in the same way, one would suppose it to be the business of real science to demonstrate the irrationality, unprofitableness, and immorality of war and of executions; or the inhumanity and harmfulness of prostitution; or the absurdity, harmfulness, and immorality of using narcotics or of eating animals; or the irrationality, harmfulness, and antiquatedness of patriotism. And such works exist, but are all considered unscientific; while works to prove

that all these things ought to continue, and works intended to satisfy an idle thirst for knowledge lacking any relation to human life, are considered to be scientific.

The deviation of the science of our time from its true purpose is strikingly illustrated by those ideals which are put forward by some scientists, and are not denied but admitted by the majority of scientific men.

These ideals are expressed not only in stupid, fashionable books, describing the world as it will be a thousand or three thousand years hence, but also by sociologists who consider themselves serious men of science. These ideals are that food, instead of being obtained from the land by agriculture, will be prepared in laboratories by chemical means, and that human labour will be almost entirely superseded by the utilisation of natural forces.

Man will not, as now, eat an egg laid by a hen he has kept, or bread grown on his field, or an apple from a tree he has reared and which has blossomed and matured in his sight; but he will eat tasty, nutritious food prepared in laboratories by the conjoint labour of many people, in which he will share to a small extent. Man will hardly need to labour, so that all men will be able to yield to idleness as the upper, ruling classes now yield to it.

Nothing shows more plainly than these ideals to what a degree the science of our times has deviated from the true path.

The great majority of men in our times lack good and sufficient food (as well as dwellings and clothes and all the first necessities of life). And this great majority of men is compelled, to the injury of its well-being, to labour continually beyond its strength. Both these evils can easily be removed by abolishing mutual strife, luxury, and the unrighteous distribution of wealth—in a word by the abolition of a false and harmful order and the establishment of a reasonable, human

manner of life. But science considers the existing order of things to be as immutable as the movements of the planets, and therefore assumes that the purpose of science is, not to elucidate the falseness of this order and to arrange a new, reasonable way of life, but, under the existing order of things, to feed everybody and enable all to be as idle as the ruling classes, living depraved lives, now are.

And, meanwhile, it is forgotten that nourishment by corn, vegetables, and fruit, raised from the soil by one's own labour, is the pleasantest, healthiest, easiest, and most natural nourishment, and that the work of using one's muscles is as necessary a condition of life as is the oxidation of the blood by breathing.

To invent means whereby people, while continuing our false division of property and labour, might be well nourished by means of chemically-prepared food and might make the forces of nature work for them, is like inventing means to pump oxygen into the lungs of a man kept in a closed chamber the air of which is bad, when all that is needed is for the man no longer to be confined in a closed chamber.

In the vegetable and animal kingdoms a laboratory has been arranged for the production of food such as can be surpassed by no professors, and to enjoy the fruits of this laboratory and to participate in it man has only to yield to that ever joyful impulse to labour without which his life is a torment. And lo and behold! the scientists of our times, instead of employing all their strength to abolish whatever hinders man from utilising the good things prepared for him, acknowledge the conditions under which man is deprived of these blessings to be unalterable; and instead of arranging the life of man so that he may work joyfully and be fed from the soil, they devise methods which will cause him to become an artificial abortion. It is like not helping a man out of confinement into the fresh air, but devising means,

instead, to pump into him the necessary quantity of oxygen, and arranging so that he may live in a stifling cellar instead of living at home.

Such false ideals could not exist if science were not on a false path.

And yet the feelings transmitted by art grow up on the bases supplied by science.

But what feelings can such misdirected science evoke? One side of this science evokes antiquated feelings which humanity has exhausted, and which in our times are bad and exclusive. The other side, occupied with the study of subjects unrelated to the conduct of human life, by its very nature cannot serve as a basis for art.

So that art in our times, to be art, must either open up its own road independently of science, or must take direction from the unrecognised science which is denounced by the orthodox section of science. And this is what art, when it even partially fulfils its mission, is doing.

It is to be hoped that the work I have tried to perform concerning art will be performed also for science: that the falseness of the theory of science for science's sake will be demonstrated; that the necessity of acknowledging Christian teaching in its true meaning will be clearly shown, and on the basis of that teaching a reappraisement be made of the knowledge we possess and of which we are so proud; that the secondariness and insignificance of experimental science, and the primacy and importance of religious, moral, and social knowledge, will be established; and that such knowledge will not, as now, be left to the guidance of the upper classes only, but will form a chief interest of all free, truth-loving men, such as those who, not in agreement with the upper classes but in their despite, have always forwarded the real science of life.

Astronomical, physical, chemical, and biological science,

as also technical and medical science, will be studied only in so far as they can help to free mankind from religious, juridical, or social deceptions, or can serve to promote the well-being of all men and not of any single class.

Only then will science cease to be what it is now—on the one hand a system of sophistries, needed for the maintenance of the existing worn-out order of society, and on the other hand a shapeless mass of miscellaneous knowledge, for the most part good for little or nothing—and become a shapely and organic whole having a definite and reasonable purpose comprehensible to all men, namely, the purpose of bringing to the consciousness of men the truths that flow from the religious perception of our times.

And only then will art, which is always dependent on science, be what it might and should be, an organ co-equally important with science for the life and progress of mankind.

Art is not a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter. Art is an organ of human life transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling. In our age the common religious perception of men is the consciousness of the brotherhood of man—we know that the well-being of man lies in union with his fellow-men. True science should indicate the various methods of applying this consciousness to life. Art should transform this perception into feeling.

The task of art is enormous. Through the influence of real art, aided by science, guided by religion, that peaceful co-operation of man which is now maintained by external means, —by our law-courts, police, charitable institutions, factory inspection, and so forth,—should be obtained by man's free and joyous activity. Art should cause violence to be set aside.[1]

[1] Tolstoy's doctrine of Non-Resistance to "him that is evil" by any use of physical force has caused much perplexity and is accepted in its completeness by but few people in the Western world. In this passage however he states it in a

And it is only art that can accomplish this.

All that now, independently of the fear of violence and punishment, makes the social life of man possible (and already this is an enormous part of the order of our lives)—all this has been brought about by art. If by art has been inculcated how people should treat religious objects, their parents, their children, their wives, their relations, strangers, foreigners; how to conduct themselves towards their elders, their superiors, towards those who suffer, towards their enemies, and towards animals; and if this has been obeyed through generations by millions of people, not only unenforced by any violence but so that the force of such customs can be shaken in no way but by means of art: then by art also other customs, more in accord with the religious perception of our time, may be evoked. If art has been able to convey the sentiment of reverence for images, for the Eucharist, and for the king's person; of shame at betraying a comrade, devotion to a flag, the necessity of revenge for an insult, the need to sacrifice one's labour for the erection and adornment of churches, the duty of defending one's honour, or the glory of one's native land—then that same art can also evoke reverence for the dignity of every man and for the life of every animal; can make men ashamed of luxury, of violence, of revenge, or of using for their pleasure that of which others are in need; can compel people freely, gladly, and without noticing it, to sacrifice themselves in the service of man.

The task for art to accomplish is to make that feeling of brotherhood and love of one's neighbour now attained only by the best members of society, the customary feeling and the instinct of all men. By evoking under imaginary conditions the feeling of brotherhood and love, religious art will train

form to which it would be hard to raise any objection. Never before had the doctrine of Non-Resistance been put so briefly, persuasively, and attractively. —A. M.

men to experience those same feelings under similar circumstances in actual life; it will lay in the souls of men the rails along which the actions of those whom art thus educates will naturally pass. And universal art, by uniting the most different people in one common feeling, by destroying separation, will educate people to union, and will show them, not by reason but by life itself, the joy of universal union reaching beyond the bounds set by life.

The destiny of art in our time is to transmit, from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling, the truth that well-being for men consists in their being united together, and to set up, in place of the existing reign of force, that kingdom of God—that is, of love—which we all recognise to be the highest aim of human life.

Possibly in the future, science may reveal to art yet newer and higher ideals which art may realise; but in our time the destiny of art is clear and definite. The task of Christian art is to establish brotherly union among men.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Translations of French poems and prose quoted in Chapter X.[1]

BAUDELAIRE'S "FLOWERS OF EVIL"

No. XXIV

I adore thee as much as the vaults of night,
O vessel of grief, taciturnity great,
And I love thee the more because of thy flight.
It seemeth, my night's beautifier, that you
Still heap up those leagues—yes! ironically heap!—
That divide from my arms the immensity blue.

I advance to attack, I climb to assault,
Like a choir of young worms at a corpse in the vault;
Thy coldness, oh cruel, implacable beast!
Yet heightens thy beauty, on which my eyes feast!

BAUDELAIRE'S "FLOWERS OF EVIL"

No. XXXVI

DUELLUM

Two warriors come running, to fight they begin,
With gleaming and blood they bespatter the air;
These games, and this clatter of arms, is the din
Of youth that's a prey to the raging of love.

The rapiers are broken! and so is our youth,
But the dagger's avenged, dear! and so is the sword,
By the nail that is steeled and the hardened tooth.
Oh! the fury of hearts aged and ulcered by love!

[1] The translation in Appendices I, II and IV are by my wife, Louise Maude. The aim of these renderings has been to keep as close to the originals as the obscurity of meaning allowed. The sense (or absence of sense) has therefore been more considered than the form of the verses.—A. M.

In the ditch, where the ounce and the pard have their lair,
Our heroes have rolled in an angry embrace;
Their skin blooms on brambles that erewhile were bare.
That ravine is a friend-inhabited hell!
Then let us roll in, oh woman inhuman,
To immortalise hatred that nothing can quell!

FROM BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE WORK ENTITLED 'LITTLE POEMS IN PROSE'

THE STRANGER

Whom dost thou love best? say, enigmatical man—thy father, thy mother, thy sister, or thy brother?

"I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother."

Thy friends?

"There you use an expression the meaning of which till now remains unknown to me."

Thy country?

"I know not in what latitude it is situated."

Beauty?

"I would gladly love her, goddess and immortal."

Gold?

"I hate it, as you hate God."

Then what do you love, extraordinary stranger?

"I love the clouds . . . the clouds that pass . . . there . . . the marvellous clouds!"

THE SOUP AND THE CLOUDS

My beloved little silly was giving me my dinner, and I was contemplating, through the open window of the dining-room, those moving architectures which God makes out of vapours, the marvellous constructions of the impalpable. And I said to myself, amid my contemplation, All these phantasmagoria are almost as beautiful as the eyes of my beautiful beloved, the monstrous little silly with the green eyes.

Suddenly I felt the violent blow of a fist on my back, and I heard

a harsh, charming voice, an hysterical voice, as it were hoarse with brandy, the voice of my dear little well-beloved, saying, Are you going to eat your soup soon, you d——b——of a dealer in clouds?

THE GALLANT MARKSMAN

As the carriage was passing through the forest he ordered it to be stopped near a shooting-gallery, saying that he wished to shoot off a few bullets to *kill* Time. To kill this monster, is it not the most ordinary and the most legitimate occupation of everyone? And he gallantly offered his arm to his dear, delicious, and execrable wife—that mysterious woman to whom he owed so much pleasure, so much pain, and perhaps also a large part of his genius.

Several bullets struck far from the intended mark—one even penetrated the ceiling; and as the charming creature laughed wildly, mocking her husband's awkwardness, he turned abruptly towards her and said, Look at that doll there on the right with the haughty mien and her nose in the air; well, dear angel, *I imagine to myself that it is you!* And he closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. The doll was neatly decapitated.

Then, bowing towards his dear one, his delightful, execrable wife, his inevitable, pitiless muse, and kissing her hand respectfully, he added, Ah! my dear angel, how I thank you for my skill!

VERLAINE'S FORGOTTEN AIRS

No. I

"The wind in the plain
Suspends its breath."—FAVART.

'Tis ecstasy languishing,
Amorous fatigue,
Of woods all the shudderings
Embraced by the breeze,
'Tis the choir of small voices
Towards the grey trees.

Oh the frail and fresh murmuring!
The twitter and buzz,
The soft cry resembling
Breathed forth by the grass . . .
Oh, the roll of the pebbles
'Neath waters that pass!

Oh, this soul that is groaning
In sleepy complaint!
In us is it moaning?
In me and in you?
Low anthem exhaling
While soft falls the dew.

VERLAINE'S "FORGOTTEN AIRS"

No. VIII

In the unending
Dulness of this land,
Uncertain the snow
Is gleaming like sand.

No kind of brightness
In copper-hued sky,
The moon you might see
Now live and now die.

Grey float the oak trees—
Cloudlike they seem—
Of neighbouring forests,
Mists in between.

Wolves hungry and lean,
And famishing crow,
What happens to you
When acrid winds blow?

In the unending
Dulness of this land,
Uncertain the snow
Is gleaming like sand.

SONG BY MAETERLINCK

When he went away,
(Then I heard the door)
When he went away,
On her lips a smile there lay . . .

Back he came to her,
(Then I heard the lamp)
Back he came to her,
Someone else was there . . .

It was death I met,
(And I heard her soul)
It was death I met,
For her he's waiting yet . . .

Someone came to say,
(Child, I am afraid)
Someone came to say
That he would go away . . .

With my lamp alight,
(Child, I am afraid)
With my lamp alight,
Approached I in affright . . .

To one door I came,
(Child, I am afraid)
To one door I came,
A shudder shook the flame . . .

At the second door,
(Child, I am afraid)
At the second door
Words did the flame outpour . . .

To the third I came,
(Child, I am afraid)
To the third I came,
Then died the little flame . . .

Should he one day return,
And see you lying dead?
Say I longed for him
When on my dying bed . . .

If he asks for you,
Say what answer then?
Give him my gold ring
And answer not a thing . . .

Should he question me
Concerning the last hour?
Say I smiled for fear
That he should shed a tear . . .

Should he question more
Without knowing me?
Like a sister speak;
Suffering he may be . . .

Should he question why
Empty is the hall?
Show the gaping door,
The lamp alight no more . . .

APPENDIX II

This is the first page of Mallarmé's book *Divagations,* referred to in Chapter X, page 215.

LE PHÉNOMÈNE FUTUR

Un ciel pâle, sur le monde qui finit de décrépitude, va peut-être partir avec les nuages: les lambeaux de la pourpre usée des couchants déteignent dans une rivière dormant à l'horizon submergé de rayons et d'eau. Les arbres s'ennuient, et, sous leur feuillage blanchi (de la poussière du temps plutôt que celle des chemins) monte la maison en toile de Montreur de choses Passées: maint réverbère attend le crépuscule et ravive les visages d'une malheureuse foule, vaincue par la maladie immortelle et le péché des siècles, d'hommes près de leurs chétives complices enceintes des fruits misérables avec lesquels périra la terre. Dans le silence inquiet de tous les yeux suppliant là-bas le soleil qui, sous l'eau, s'enfonce avec le désespoir d'un cri, voici le simple boniment: "Nulle enseigne ne vous régale du spectacle intérieur, car il n'est pas maintenant un peintre capable d'en donner une ombre triste. J'apporte, vivante (et préservée à travers les ans par la science souveraine), une Femme d'autrefois. Quelque folie, originelle et naïve, une extase d'or, je ne sais quoi! par elle nommé sa chevelure, se ploie avec la grâce des étoffes autour d'un visage qu' éclaire la nudité sanglante de ses lèvres. A la place du vêtement vain, elle a un corps; et les yeux, semblables aux pierres rares! ne valent pas ce regard qui sort de sa chair heureuse: des seins levés comme s'ils étaient pleins d'un lait éternel, la pointe vers le ciel, les jambes lisses qui gardent le sel de

la mer première." Se rappelant leurs pauvres épouses, chauves, morbides et pleines d'horreur, les maris se pressent: elles aussi par curiosité, mélancoliques, veulent voir.

Quand tous auront contemplé la noble créature, vestige de quelque époque déjà maudite, les uns indifférents, car ils n'auront pas eu la force de comprendre, mais d'autres navrés et la paupière humide de larmes résignées, se regarderont; tandis que les poètes de ces temps, sentant se rallumer leur yeux éteints, s'achemineront vers leur lampe, le cerveau ivre un instant d'une gloire confuse, hantés du Rythme et dans l'oubli d'exister à une époque qui survit à la beauté.

THE FUTURE PHENOMENON—BY MALLARMÉ

A pale sky, above the world that is ending through decrepitude, about perhaps to pass away with the clouds: shreds of worn-out purple of the sunsets wash off their colour in a river sleeping on the horizon, submerged with rays and water. The trees are weary and, beneath their whitened foliage (whitened by the dust of time rather than that of the roads) rises the canvas house of "Showman of Things Past." Many a lamp awaits the gloaming and brightens the faces of a miserable crowd vanquished by the everlasting sickness and the sin of ages, of men by the sides of their puny accomplices pregnant with the miserable fruit through which the world will perish. In the anxious silence of all the eyes there supplicating the sun, which sinks under the water with the desperation of a cry, this is the plain announcement: "No signboard regales you with the spectacle that is inside, for there is no painter now capable of giving even a sad shadow of it. I bring, living (and preserved by sovereign science through the years), a Woman of other days. Some kind of folly, naïve and original, an ecstasy of gold, I know not what, by her called her hair, clings with the grace of drapery round a face brightened by the blood-red nudity of her lips. In place

of vain clothing, she has a body; and her eyes, resembling precious stones! are not worth that look which comes from her happy flesh: breasts raised as if full of eternal milk, the points towards the sky; the smooth legs, that keep the salt of the first sea." Remembering their poor spouses, bald, morbid, and full of horrors, the husbands press forward: the women too, from curiosity, gloomily wish to see.

When all shall have contemplated the noble creature, vestige of some epoch already damned, they will look at each other, some indifferently, for they will not have had strength to understand, but others broken-hearted and with eye-lids wet with tears of resignation, while the poets of those times, feeling their dim eyes rekindled, will make their way towards their lamp, their brain for an instant drunk with confused glory, haunted by Rhythm and forgetful that they exist at an epoch which has survived Beauty.

APPENDIX III

Poems referred to in Chapter X, page 217.

No. 1

The following verse is by Henri de Régnier, from page 28 of a volume of his poems:—

L'ACCUEIL

Si tu veux que ce soir, à l'âtre, je t'accueille—
Jette d'abord la fleur, qui de ta main s'effeuille;
Son cher parfum ferait ma tristesse trop sombre;
Et ne regard pas derrière toi vers l'ombre,
Car je te veux, ayant oublié la forêt
Et le vent, et l'écho et ce qui parlerait
Voix à ta solitude ou pleur à ta silence!
Et debout, avec ton ombre qui te devance,
Et hautine sur mon seuil, et pàle, et vénue
Comme si j'etais mort ou que tu fusses nue!

Henri de Régnier: *Les jeux rustiques et devins.*

THE WELCOME

If you want us to-night by my fireside to greet—
Drop the flower you hold that sheds petals so sweet;
Its dear scent would render my sadness too black;
And do not on the shadows behind you look back,
For I want you, forgetful of forest and wind,
Of echoes and all you'd recall to your mind
Giving voice to your silence, to solitude tears,
At my door, while before you your shadow appears,
And haughty and pale and erect you stand there—
Just as if I were dead, or that naked you were.

No. 2

The following verses are by Vielé-Griffin, from page 28 of a volume of his poems:—

OISEAU BLEU COULEUR DU TEMPS

1.

Sais-tu l'oubli
D'un vain doux rêve,
Oiseau moqueur
De la forêt?
Le jour pâlit,
La nuit se lève,
Et dans mon cœur
L'ombre a pleuré;

2.

O chante-moi
Ta folle gamme,
Car j'ai dormi
Ce jour durant;
Le lâche emoi
Où fut mon âme
Sanglote ennui
Le jour mourant . . .

3.

Sais-tu le chant
De sa parole
Et de sa voix,
Toi qui redis
Dans le couchant
Ton air frivole
Comme autrefois
Sous les midis?

4.

O, chante alors
La mélodie
De son amour,
Mon fol espoir,
Parmi les ors
Et l'incendie
Du vain doux jour
Qui meurt ce soir.

FRANCIS VIELÉ-GRIFFIN: *Poèmes et Poésies.*

BLUE BIRD COLOUR OF THE TIMES

Canst thou forget
In dreams so vain,
Oh, mocking bird
Of forest deep?
The day doth set,
Night comes again,
My heart has heard
The shadows weep;

2.

Thy tones let flow
In maddening scale,
For I have slept
The livelong day;
Emotions low
In me now wail,
My soul they've kept:
Light dies away . . .

3.

That music sweet,
Ah, do you know
Her voice and speech?
Your airs so light
You who repeat
In sunset's glow,
As you sang, each,
At noonday's height.

4.

Of my desire,
My hope so bold,
Her love—up, sing,
Sing 'neath this light,
This flaming fire,
And all the gold
The eve doth bring
Ere comes the night.

No. 3

And here are some verses by the esteemed young poet Verhaeren, which I also take from page 28 of his Works:—

ATTIRANCES

Lointainement, et si étrangement pareils,
De grands masques d'argent que la brume recule,
Vaguent, au jour tombant, autour des vieux soleils.

Les doux lointaines!—et comme, au fond du crépuscule,
Ils nous fixent le cœur, immensément le cœur,
Avec les yeux défunts de leur visage d'âme.

C'est toujours du silence, à moins, dans la pâleur
Du soir, un jet de feu sondain, un cri de flamme,
Un départ de lumière inattendu vers Dieu.

On se laisse charmer et troubler de mystère,
Et l'on dirait des morts qui taisent un adieu
Trop mystique, pour être écouté par la terre!

Sont-ils le souvenir matériel et clair
Des éphèbes chrétiens couchés aux catacombes
Parmi les lys? Sont-ils leur regard et leur chair?

Ou seul, ce qui survit de merveilleux aux tombes
De ceux qui sont partis, vers leurs rêves, un soir,
Conquérir la folie à l'assaut des nuées?

Lontainement, combien nous les sentons vouloir
Un peu d'amour pour leurs œuvres destituées,
Pour leur errance et leur tristesse aux horizons.

Toujours! aux horizons du cœur et de pensées,
Alors que les vieux soirs éclatent en blasons
Soudains, pour les gloires noires et angoissées.

ÉMILE VERHAEREN,
Poèmes.

ATTRACTIONS

Large masks of silver, by mists drawn away,
So strangely alike, yet so far apart,
Float round the old suns when faileth the day.

They transfix our heart, so immensely our heart,
Those distances mild, in the twilight deep,
Looking out of dead faces, with their spirit eyes.

All around is now silence, except when there leap
In the pallor of evening, with fiery cries,
Some fountains of flame that Godward do fly.

Mysterious trouble and charms us enfold,
You might think that the dead spoke a silent good-bye,
Oh! too mystical far on earth to be told!

Are they the memories, material and bright,
Of the Christian youths that in catacombs sleep
'Mid the lilies? Are they their flesh or their sight?

Or the marvel alone that survives, in the deep,
Of those that, one night, returned to their dreams
Of conquering folly by assaulting the skies?

For their destitute works—we feel it, it seems,
For a little love their longing cries
From horizons far—for their wanderings and pain.

In horizons ever of heart and thought,
While the evenings old in bright blaze wane
Suddenly, for black glories anguish fraught.

No. 4

And the following is a poem by Moréas, evidently an admirer of Greek beauty. It is from page 28 of a volume of his poems:—

ÉNONE AU CLAIR VISAGE

Énone, j'avais cru qu'en aimant ta beauté
Où l'âme avec le corps trouvent leur unité,
J'allais, m'affermissant et le cœur et l'esprit,
Monter jusqu'à cela, qui jamais ne périt,
N'ayant été créé, qui n'est froidure ou feu,
Qui n'est beau quelque part et laid en autre lieu;
Et me flattais encor d'une belle harmonie
Que j'eusse composé du meilleur et du pire,
Ainsi que le chanteur qui chérit Polymnie,
En accordant le grave avec l'aigu, retire
Un son bien élevé sur les nerfs de sa lyre.
Mais mon courage, hélas! se pâmant comme mort,
M'enseigna que le trait qui m'avait fait amant
Ne fut pas de cet arc que courbe sans effort
La Vénus qui naquit du mâle seulement,
Mais que j'avais souffert cette Vénus dernière,
Qui a le cœur couard, né d'une faible mère.
Et pourtant, ce mauvais garçon, chasseur habile,
Qui charge son carquois de sagette subtile,
Qui secoue en riant sa torche, pour un jour,
Qui ne pose jamais que sur de tendres fleurs,
C'est sur un teint charmant qu'il essuie les pleurs,
Et c'est encore un Dieu, Énone, cet Amour.

Mais, laisse, les oiseaux du printemps sont partis,
Et je vois les rayons du soleil amortis.
Énone, ma douleur, harmonieux visage,
Superbe humilité, doux-honnête langage,
Hier me remirant dans cet étang glacé
Qui au bout du jardin se couvre de feuillage,
Sur ma face je vis que les jours ont passé.

JEAN MORÉAS: *Le Pélerin Passionné.*

ENONE OF THE CLEAR VISAGE

Enone, in loving thy beauty I thought
(Where the soul and the body to union are brought)
I should mount, by strengthening my heart and my mind,
Till that which knows nothing of Death I should find:
Uncreated, which is not here ugly, there fair,
Nor cold in one part and on fire otherwhere.
I flattered myself that the better and worse
To a harmony perfect should move in my verse;
As the poet who serves Polyhymnia can bring
The grave and the piercing to concord, and ring
Notes loftier still from the nerves of his lyre.
But my courage which now does but faintly suspire,
Nigh to death, hath proclaimed that the arrow—ah, woe!—
Which pierced me, and first with this love made me moan,
Was no arrow dispatched from the easy-bent bow
By a Venus who sprang from a father alone.
But 'twas that other Venus who caused me to smart,
She, born of frail mother with cowardly heart.
Yet this naughty rascal, this hunter so bold,
Whose quiver does arrows of subtlety hold,
Who, laughing and shaking his torch (for a day!),
Never rests but upon tender flowers and gay,
And on a sweet skin dries his tears as they flow—
'Tis a God still, Enone, this Love that we know.
Let it pass, for the birds of the springtime are fled,
And I see the last rays of a sun that's nigh dead.
Enone, my grief, ah harmonious face,

Humility grand, words of virtue and grace,
I looked yestere'en in the pond frozen fast,
Strewn with leaves at the end of the garden's fair space,
And I read in my face that those days are now past.

No. 5

And this is also from page 28 of a thick book, full of similar poems, by M. Montesquiou.

BERCEUSE D'OMBRE

Des formes, des formes, des formes
Blanche, bleue, et rose, et d'or
Descendront du haut des ormes
Sur l'enfant qui se rendort.
Des formes!

Des plumes, des plumes, des plumes
Pour composer un doux nid.
Midi sonne: les enclumes
Cessent; la rumeur finit . . .
Des plumes!

Des roses, des roses, des roses
Pour embaumer son sommeil,
Vos pétales sont moroses
Près du sourire vermeil.
O roses!

Des ailes, des ailes, des ailes
Pour bourdonner à son front,
Abeilles et demoiselles,
Des rythmes qui berceront.
Des ailes!

Des branches, des branches, des branches
Pour tresser un pavillon,
Par où des clartés moins franches
Descendront sur l'oisillon.
Des branches!

Des songes, des songes, des songes
Dans ses pensers entr'ouverts
Glissez un peu de mensonges
A voir le vie au travers.
Des songes!

Des fées, des fées, des fées,
Pour filer leurs écheveaux
Des mirages, de bouffées
Dans tous ces petits cerveaux.
Des fées.

Des anges, des anges, des anges
Pour emporter dans l'éther
Les petits enfants étranges
Qui ne veulent pas rester . . .
Nos anges!

COMTE ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC,
Les Hortensias Bleues.

THE SHADOW LULLABY

Forms, forms, forms
White, blue, and gold, and red
Descending from the elm trees,
On sleeping baby's head.
Forms!

Feathers, feathers, feathers
To make a cosy nest.
Twelve striking: stops the clamour;
The anvils are at rest . . .
Oh feathers!

Roses, roses, roses
To scent his sleep awhile,
Pale are your fragrant petals
Beside his ruby smile.
Oh roses!

Wings, wings, wings
Of bees and dragon-flies,
To hum around his forehead,
And lull him with your sighs.
Oh wings!

Branches, branches, branches
A shady bower to twine,
Through which, oh daylight, faintly
Descend on birdie mine.
Branches!

Dreams, dreams, dreams
Into his opening mind,
Let in a little falsehood
With sights of life behind.
Dreams!

Fairies, fairies, fairies,
To twine and twist their threads
With puffs of phantom visions
Into these little heads.
Fairies!

Angels, angels, angels
To the ether far away,
Those children strange to carry
That here don't wish to stay . . .
Our angels!

APPENDIX IV

These are the contents of the *Nibelungen Ring:*

The first part tells that the nymphs, the daughters of the Rhine, for some reason guard gold in the Rhine and sing: Weia, Waga, Woge du Welle, Walle zur Wiege, Wagalaweia, Wallala, Weila, Weia, and so forth.

These singing nymphs are pursued by a dwarf (a nibelung) who desires to seize them. The dwarf cannot catch any of them. Then the nymphs guarding the gold tell the dwarf just what they ought to keep secret, namely, that whoever renounces love will be able to steal the gold they are guarding. And the dwarf renounces love and steals the gold. This ends the first scene.

In the second scene a god and a goddess lie in a field in sight of a castle which giants have built for them. Presently they wake up and are pleased with the castle, and they relate that in payment for this work they must give the goddess Freia to the giants. The giants come for their pay. But the god Wotan objects to parting with Freia. The giants grow angry. The gods hear that the dwarf has stolen the gold, and promise to confiscate it and to pay the giants with it. But the giants won't trust them, and seize the goddess Freia in pledge.

The third scene takes place under ground. Alberich, the dwarf who stole the gold, for some reason beats another dwarf, Mime, and takes from him a helmet which has the power both of making people invisible and of turning them into animals. The gods, Wotan and others, appear and quarrel with one another and with the dwarfs, and wish to take the gold, but Alberich won't give it up, and (like everybody all through the piece) behaves in a way to ensure his

own ruin. He puts on the helmet, and becomes first a dragon and then a toad. The gods catch the toad, take the helmet off it, and carry Alberich away with them.

Scene IV. The gods bring Alberich to their home and order him to command his dwarfs to bring them all the gold. The dwarfs bring it. Alberich gives up the gold but keeps a magic ring. The gods take the ring. So Alberich curses the ring and says it is to bring misfortune on anyone who has it. The giants appear; they bring the goddess Freia and demand her ransom. They stick up staves of Freia's height, and gold is poured in between these staves: this is to be the ransom. There is not enough gold, so the helmet is thrown in, and they demand the ring also. Wotan refuses to give it up, but the goddess Erda appears and commands him to do so because it brings misfortune. Wotan gives it up. Freia is released. The giants, having received the ring, fight, and one of them kills the other. This ends the Prelude, and we come to the First Day.

The scene shows a house in a tree. Siegmund runs in tired, and lies down. Sieglinda, the mistress of the house (and wife of Hunding), gives him a drugged draught and they fall in love with each other. Sieglinda's husband comes home, learns that Siegmund belongs to a hostile race, and wishes to fight him next day; but Sieglinda drugs her husband and comes to Siegmund. Siegmund discovers that Sieglinda is his sister, and that his father drove a sword into the tree so that no one can get it out. Siegmund pulls the sword out, and commits incest with his sister.

Act II. Siegmund is to fight with Hunding. The gods discuss the question as to whom they shall award the victory. Wotan, approving of Siegmund's incest with his sister, wishes to spare him, but under pressure from his wife, Fricka, he orders the Valkyrie Brünnhilda to kill Siegmund. Siegmund goes to fight. Sieglinda faints. Brünnhilda appears

and wishes to slay Siegmund. Siegmund wishes to kill Sieglinda also, but Brünnhilda does not allow it, and he fights with Hunding. Brünnhilda defends Siegmund, but Wotan defends Hunding. Siegmund's sword breaks, and he is killed. Sieglinda runs away.

Act III. The Valkyries (divine Amazons) are on the stage. The Valkyrie Brünnhilda arrives on horseback, bringing Siegmund's body. She is flying from Wotan, who is chasing her for her disobedience. Wotan catches her, and as a punishment dismisses her from her post as a Valkyrie. He also casts a spell on her, so that she has to go to sleep and continue asleep until a man wakes her. When someone wakes her she will fall in love with him. Wotan kisses her; she falls asleep. He lets off fire, which surrounds her.

We now come to the Second Day. The dwarf Mime forges a sword in a wood. Siegfried appears. He is a son born from the incest of brother with sister (Siegmund with Sieglinda), and has been brought up in this wood by the dwarf. In general the motives for the actions of everybody in this production are quite unintelligible. Siegfried learns his own origin, and that the broken sword was his father's. He orders Mime to re-forge it, and then goes off. Wotan comes in the guise of a wanderer and relates what will happen: that he who has not learnt to fear will forge the sword and will defeat everybody. The dwarf conjectures that this is Siegfried, and wants to poison him. Siegfried returns, forges his father's sword, and runs off, shouting, "Heiho heiho heiho! Ho ho! Aha! oho! aha! Heiaho! heiaho! heiaho! Ho! ho! Hahei! hoho! hahei!"

And we get to Act II. Alberich sits guarding a giant, who, in form of a dragon, guards the gold he has received. Wotan appears, and for some unknown reason foretells that Siegfried will come and kill the dragon. Alberich wakes the dragon and asks him for the ring, promising to defend

him from Siegfried. The dragon won't give up the ring. Exit Alberich. Mime and Siegfried appear. Mime hopes the dragon will teach Siegfried to fear. But Siegfried does not fear. He drives Mime away and kills the dragon, after which he puts his finger, smeared with the dragon's blood, to his lips. This enables him to know men's secret thoughts, as well as the language of birds. The birds tell him where the treasure and the ring are, and also that Mime wishes to poison him. Mime returns and says out loud that he wishes to poison Siegfried. This is meant to signify that Siegfried, having tasted dragon's blood, understands people's secret thoughts. Siegfried, having learnt Mime's intentions, kills him. The birds tell Siegfried where Brünnhilda is, and he goes to find her.

Act III. Wotan calls up Erda. Erda prophesies to Wotan, and gives him advice. Siegfried appears, quarrels with Wotan, and they fight. Suddenly Siegfried's sword breaks Wotan's spear, which had been more powerful than anything else. Siegfried goes into the fire to Brünnhilda and kisses her; she wakes up, abandons her divinity, and throws herself into Siegfried's arms.

Third Day. Prelude. Three Norns plait a golden rope and talk about the future. They go away. Siegfried and Brünnhilda appear. Siegfried takes leave of her, gives her the ring, and goes away.

Act I. By the Rhine. A king wants to get married and also to give his sister in marriage. Hagen, the king's wicked brother, advises him to marry Brünnhilda and to give his sister to Siegfried. Siegfried appears; they give him a drugged draught, which makes him forget all the past and fall in love with the king's sister, Gutrune. So he rides off with Gunther, the king, to get Brünnhilda to be the king's bride. The scene changes. Brünnhilda sits with the ring. A Valkyrie comes to her and tells her that Wotan's spear is

broken, and advises her to give the ring to the Rhine nymphs. Siegfried comes and by means of the magic helmet turns himself into Gunther, demands the ring from Brünnhilda, seizes it, and drags her off to sleep with him.

Act II. By the Rhine. Alberich and Hagen discuss how to get the ring. Siegfried comes, tells how he has obtained a bride for Gunther and how he spent the night with her but put a sword between himself and her. Brünnhilda rides up, recognises the ring on Siegfried's hand, and declares that it was he, and not Gunther, who was with her. Hagen stirs everybody up against Siegfried, and decides to kill him next day when hunting.

Act III. Again the nymphs in the Rhine relate what has happened. Siegfried, who has lost his way, appears. The nymphs ask him for the ring but he won't give it up. Hunters appear. Siegfried tells the story of his life. Hagen then gives him a draught which causes his memory to return to him. Siegfried relates how he aroused and obtained Brünnhilda, and everyone is astonished. Hagen stabs him in the back, and the scene is changed. Gutrune meets the corpse of Siegfried. Gunther and Hagan quarrel about the ring, and Hagan kills Gunther. Brünnhilda cries. Hagen wishes to take the ring from Siegfried's hand, but the hand of the corpse raises itself threateningly. Brünnhilda takes the ring from Siegfried's hand, and when Siegfried's corpse is carried to the pyre she gets on to a horse and leaps into the fire. The Rhine rises, and the waves reach the pyre. In the river are three nymphs. Hagen throws himself into the fire to get the ring, but the nymphs seize him and carry him off. One of them holds the ring; and that is the end of the matter.

The impression obtainable from my recapitulation is of course incomplete. But however incomplete it may be it is certainly infinitely more favourable than the impression which results from reading the four booklets in which the work is printed.

PART XIV

TOLSTOY'S VIEW OF ART

THE substance of the following article appeared in the *Contemporary Review,* August 1900, as a reply to critics who had misquoted, misrepresented, or misunderstood Tolstoy. Their attacks were too ephemeral for it to be necessary to reproduce the polemical part of the reply; but, as previously remarked, what is worth preserving is an explanation of Tolstoy's position, which as it obtained his unqualified approval is conclusive on certain matters in dispute. In order to give the statement in the words Tolstoy endorsed I have retained some passages which have appeared in previous chapters of this book, and can only apologize to my readers for these repetitions.

Tolstoy had great difficulty in presenting his opinions (especially his religious and philosophic opinions) to the world. Several of his books were prohibited in Russia. Those printed in Geneva were carelessly edited, and (missing the attention Tolstoy usually gave to his proof-sheets) contained errors that tripped up his translators. Other works of his, permitted in Russia, were tampered with by the Censor, who struck out what Tolstoy wrote and inserted words he objected to, as, for instance, was the case in the Russian edition of *What is Art?*

But, for non-Russian readers, the heaviest blow to Tolstoy's reputation as a clear and sane thinker was struck, not by the Censor, but by translators who failed to reproduce his thought. Versions of some of his most serious works appeared containing much absolute nonsense. They were issued at a time when readers, surprised that a novelist should

undertake philosophic work, were wondering whether they ought to regard Tolstoy seriously in his new rôle; and they caused some to conclude that, as a philosopher, he need not be taken seriously.[1]

A man who spoke the truth as he saw it under constant risk of persecution, whose works were suppressed or mutilated at home and badly edited abroad, who was translated so that he was made to assert what he in fact denied, has a special claim to fair treatment at the hands of reviewers. But this claim was not always recognized.

His rank among the foremost writers of fiction was not questioned; but some of his philosophical works treating of human conduct, activities, institutions, and beliefs, had a different fate. When *What is Art?* appeared, it had a mixed reception, though some leading critics saw its value and one of them hailed it as "the most important essay in pure criticism of recent years, and destined to become a classic."

Tolstoy had in this book said much that was new, startling, and not quickly digestible; and he had expressed it so caustically, had been so severe on critics, specialists, professional artists, and art-schools, as well as on whole groups of people from spiritualists to scientists—including fifty or more well-known people then living, into the bargain —he had, in fact, hit out so freely and so hard that counter-attacks of considerable asperity were inevitable. In reply to such attacks the following pages were written.

No department of science, as Véron justly remarks, has been more generally abandoned to the dreams of the metaphysicians than esthetic philosophy. The task Tolstoy undertook

[1] The existence of such editions was a factor in inducing one hundred and twenty very distinguished English and American writers, dramatists, critics, and publicists, to endorse a letter written by G. Bernard Shaw to the press, in 1922, asking the public to support the "Maude Tolstoys," in the Oxford University Press edition, and thus make commercially possible the completion of a reliable and satisfactory rendering of Tolstoy's works in English.

was to clear up the "the frightful obscurity which reigns in this region of speculation."

What is Art? Its manifestations are "bounded on one side by the practically useful and on the other by unsuccessful attempts at art." But what working definition of art have we that would enable us to feel sure that this or that production of human activity is a work of art? The answer at first seems very simple to those "who talk without thinking." They are accustomed to say that "Art is such activity as produces beauty." But this only shifts the matter a step. We have now to ask for a working definition of beauty, and on careful examination we find that this has nowhere been given. Every attempt to define beauty *objectively,* as consisting "either in utility, or in adjustment to a purpose, or in symmetry, or in order, or in proportion, or in smoothness, or in harmony of the parts, or in unity amid variety, or in various combinations of these" (p. 161), has broken down utterly, and we have nothing left but a *subjective* definition which amounts to this, that beauty is "that which pleases us" without evoking in us desire. In other words, "Beauty is simply a certain kind of disinterested pleasure received by us." This definition seems clear enough, but unfortunately it is inexact, and can be widened to include the pleasure derived from drink, from food, from touching a delicate skin, and so forth, as is done by Guyau, Kralik, and other estheticians.

A yet more serious trouble is, that different things please different people. Instead of getting a solid basis for a science, we get landed in confusion arising from the fact that tastes differ. If we use the word *beauty* in our definition of art, and if beauty means "that which pleases," and if different things please different people—our definition is useless. One man will say a certain thing is a work of art because it pleases him, another will reply that it is not a work of art because he does not like it.

And this is precisely what has happened and is happening. Is Walt Whitman a great poet? Yes, says A, he is, because I like his poems and agree with them. No, says B, he is not, because I don't like his poems and disagree with them.

Thus the science of esthetics has as yet failed to get even a start. It has not told us what art is, still less has it enabled us to judge of the quality of art. "So that the whole existing science of esthetics fails to do what we might expect from it, being a mental activity calling itself a science: namely, it does not define the qualities and laws of art, or of the beautiful (if that be the content of art), or the nature of taste (if taste decides the question of art and its merit), and then on the basis of such definitions acknowledge as art those productions which correspond to these laws, and reject those which do not come under them. But this science of esthetics consists in first acknowledging a certain set of productions to be art (because they please us), and then framing such a theory of art that all these productions which please a certain circle of people should fit into it" (p. 164).

Such being the case, reasonable men should be not merely ready but anxious to avoid the use of the word beauty in framing their definition of art, and should select words which mean the same thing to each of us who use them. Yet, strange to say, the estheticians, the specialists, and the "cultured crowd," cling tenaciously and even fanatically to the use of a word they cannot define in a serviceable manner. They are as angry with anyone who protests against its use in a scientific definition, as the Scarboro' roughs [1] are with a Quaker who says that men ought not to kill one another.

"As is always the case, the more cloudy and confused the conception conveyed by a word, with the more *aplomb* and self-assurance do people use that word, pretending that what

[1] Written soon after the Rowntrees had been attacked by a patriotic mob, whose feelings were harrowed by an attempt to hold a peace-meeting.

is understood by it is so simple and clear that it is not worth while even to discuss what it actually means. This is how matters of orthodox religion are usually dealt with, and this is how people now deal with the conception of beauty" (p. 137).

For his part, Tolstoy prefers to understand, and to let other people understand, what he means by the words he uses, and he has therefore framed a definition of art which avoids all obscurity.

"*Art is a human activity, consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them*" (p. 173).

Art is possible because we share one common human nature. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. All who are capable of experiencing "that simple feeling familiar to the plainest man and even to a child, that sense of infection with another's feeling—compelling us to joy in another's gladness, to sorrow at another's grief, and to mingle souls with another" (p. 273), possess the mental and emotional telegraph wires along which an artist's influence may pass.

A common crowd may be swayed by an orator, but not by the ablest mathematical lecturer; for whereas *thoughts* can only be transferred to minds sufficiently prepared to receive them, the *feelings* that are the birthright of our common humanity are shared by all normal people. When an orator fails to sway his audience, we say the orator has failed, not the audience. But when a boy fails to understand the fifth proposition because he has not understood those that preceded it, we do not say that Euclid has failed but that the boy has not understood him. Science is a human activity transmitting thoughts from man to man: Art is a human activity transmitting feelings. They have some features in common. Clearness, simplicity, and compression, are desirable in both,

and the same book or the same speech may contain both science and art. It is desirable to discriminate clearly between the one and the other, though both alike are "indispensable means of communication, without which mankind could not exist" (pp. 175 and 321).

Before passing from definitions to deductions based on them, reference should be made to the physiological evolutionary definition of Schiller, Darwin, and Herbert Spencer, which Tolstoy sums up thus: "Art is an activity arising even in the animal kingdom and 'springing from sexual desire and the propensity to play' " (p. 169). This, though superior to the definitions which depend on the conception of beauty, is unsatisfactory because, "instead of speaking about the artistic activity itself, which is the real matter in hand, it treats of the *derivation* of art" (p. 169).

Accepting Tolstoy's definition of art, we at once see that art covers a much wider ground than we have been accustomed to suppose.

"We are accustomed to understand art to be only what we hear and see in theatres, concerts, and exhibitions; together with buildings, statues, poems, novels. . . . But all this is but the smallest part of the art by which we communicate with each other in life. All human life is filled with works of art of every kind—from cradle-song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress, and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity" (p. 174).

But we generally use the word in a special and restricted sense to mean, not all human activity that deliberately and with premeditation transmits feelings, "but only that part which we for some reason select from it, and to which we attach special importance" (pp. 174–175).

Before considering what kind of art deserves to be thus specially selected for our highest esteem, we must clearly

distinguish between two different things: the *subject-matter* of art and the *form* of art apart from its subject-matter. This distinction is fundamentally important and, as soon as it is made, the vexed question of the relation of art to morality solves itself easily and inevitably.

Let us take art apart from its subject-matter first.

"There is one indubitable sign distinguishing real art from its counterfeit—namely, the infectiousness of art. If a man without exercising effort, and without altering his standpoint, on reading, hearing, or seeing, another man's work experiences a mental condition which unites him with that man and with other people who also partake of that work, then the object evoking that condition is a work of art" (p. 274).

"And not only is infection a sure sign of art, but the degree of infectiousness is also the sole measure of excellence in art."

"*The stronger the infection the better is the art,* as art, speaking now apart from its subject-matter—that is, not considering the quality of the feelings it transmits" (p. 275).

From this point of view, art has really nothing to do with morality. The feelings transmitted may be good or bad feelings, and may produce the best or the worst results on those who are influenced by them, yet in either case the man who transmits them is an artist.

"The feelings with which the artist infects others may be most various—very strong or very weak, very important or very insignificant, very bad or very good: feelings of love for native land, self-devotion and submission to fate or to God expressed in a drama, raptures of lovers described in a novel, feelings of voluptuousness expressed in a picture, courage expressed in a triumphal march, merriment evoked by a dance, humor evoked by a funny story, the feeling of

quietness transmitted by an evening landscape or by a lullaby, or the feeling of admiration evoked by a beautiful arabesque—it is all art" (pp. 172–173).

If you have not lost the capacity—usually possessed by people leading a sane and natural life—to share the feelings expressed by others, you may try the quality of a production first of all by this internal test: Does it unite you in feeling with its author and with others who are exposed to its influence? Only if it does this, have *you* any right to testify to its being a work of art.

If you are infected by the work, and are therefore sure that it is a work of art, the next question is whether it is a weak work of "exclusive" art, or a great work of "universal" art. It may influence you—who have, perhaps, been specially trained and accustomed to that kind of art, or who share the prepossessions of the artist and belong to his set, class, school, sect, or race,—but is it capable of influencing men of other classes, races, and ages? Here the primary internal test is supplemented by an external one. There are works of "universal" art (using the word, of course, in a comparative and not in an absolute sense). The *Iliad,* the *Odyssey,* the story of Joseph, the *Psalms,* the Gospel parables, the story of Sakya Muni, the hymns of the *Vedas,* the best folk-legends, fairy-tales, and folk-songs, are understood by all. If only they are adequately rendered, and are received not superstitiously but with an open mind, they are "quite comprehensible now to us, educated or uneducated, as they were comprehensible to the men of those times, long ago, who were even less educated than our labourers" (p. 126).

Even a strictly national art, such as Japanese decorative art, may be admirable and "universal." "The *feeling* (of admiration at, and delight in, the combination of lines and colours) which the artist has experienced, and with which he

infects the spectator" (p. 295), may be so sincere that it acts on men of other races without demanding from them any laborious preparation before they can enjoy it.

When we find ourselves admiring "exclusive art," we must beware of flattering ourselves with the supposition that great masses of people do not like what *we* consider undoubtedly good—because *they* are not sufficiently developed, while *we* are very superior people. Perhaps we admire and enjoy these things, not because they are very good but merely because we have trained ourselves to admire them and have got into the habit of doing so. But "people may habituate themselves to anything, even to the very worst things. As people may habituate themselves to bad food, to spirits, tobacco, and opium, just in the same way they may habituate themselves to bad art—and that is exactly what is being done" (p. 224).

Nor should we let our self-sufficiency blind us to the obvious lesson of history: "we know that the majority of the productions of the art of the upper classes, such as various odes, poems, dramas, cantatas, pastorals, pictures, and so forth, which delighted people of the upper classes when they were produced, never were afterwards either understood or valued by the great masses of mankind, but have remained what they were at first, a mere pastime for the rich people of their time, for whom alone they ever were of any importance" (pp. 194–5)

"Art is a human activity," and, consequently, does not exist for its own sake, but is valuable or objectionable in proportion to the benefit or the harm it brings to mankind. Its subject-matter consists of feelings which are contagious or infectious—that is, which can spread from man to man. Is it not supremely important *what* feelings spread among us?

From this point of view the connection between morality

and art is intimate and inevitable. It is a fact of human life from which we can no more escape than we can from gravitation.

Art unites men; and the better the feelings in which it unites them the better it will be for humanity.

But which are the best and highest feelings? How are we to discern or to define them? They have differed, and men's definitions of them have differed, from age to age; but, as Tolstoy explains, each age has had its dominant view of life, which may be called its "religious perception." Humanity progresses, and our view of life, our religious perception, is in many things different from that, say, of the ancient Greeks. In relation *not to the forms of art but to its subject-matter* it would be a mistake to suppose "that the very best that can be done by the art of nations after nineteen hundred years of Christian teaching, is to choose as the ideal of their life the ideal that was held by a small, semi-savage, slave-holding people who lived two thousand years ago, who imitated the nude human body extremely well, and erected buildings pleasant to look at" (pp. 188–189).

And Tolstoy, having begun by giving us his definition of art, concludes by giving us a statement of the view of life he has accepted and which he believes is influencing us all whether we know it or not. It is, he says, Christ's teaching in its real—and not in its customary and perverted—meaning.

"That meaning has not only become accessible to all men of our times, but the whole life of man to-day is permeated by the spirit of that teaching, and consciously or unconsciously is guided by it" (pp. 308–309).

"The religious perception of our time in its widest and most practical application is the consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective,

temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among men—in their loving harmony with one another" (p. 281).

And whether we accept this view of life or some other, it is certain that the view we hold will influence our approval or disapproval of the various feelings transmitted by art.

Accepting Tolstoy's standpoint, we should allow the highest honour to "positive feelings of love to God and one's neighbour, and negative feelings of indignation and horror at the violation of love"; but the realm of subject-matter for good art includes much more than that.

"The artist of the future will understand that to compose a fairy-tale, a touching little song, a lullaby or an entertaining riddle, an amusing jest, or to draw a sketch in such a way that it will delight dozens of generations or millions of children and adults, is incomparably more important and more fruitful than to compose a novel or a symphony, or paint a picture, of the kind which will divert some members of the wealthy classes for a short time and then for ever be forgotten. The region of this art of the simple feelings accessible to all is enormous and it is as yet almost untouched" (p. 318).

The artist should know that this art of the simple feelings of common life, like the highest religious art, tends to unite us all and to exclude none, as in the example Tolstoy gives on p. 287 of the effect of music.

Thus, apart from subject-matter, the best art is that which best accomplishes its purpose of infecting others with the feelings the artist wishes to impart. And the best subject-matter is that which, directly or indirectly, tends to forward brotherly union among all men.

The good art of the future should be superior to our present art in "clearness, beauty, simplicity, and compres-

sion," for one penalty of forgetting the primary aim of art is that we greatly lose that which is a natural accompaniment of art—the pleasure given by beauty. We are like men who, living to eat, eventually lose even the natural pleasure food affords to those who eat to live.

Such, in brief outline, are Tolstoy's essential views of art. Even so bare and incomplete a recapitulation, stripped as it is of the convincing arguments, the brilliant examples, and the masterly support and elucidation which are crammed into the pages of his remarkable book may suffice to show that it is a work deserving careful consideration.

To the above, written soon after *What is Art?* was first published, I should like now, in 1924, to add a few words.

The chief idea in *What is Art?* besides its definition of art, is Tolstoy's insistence on the need to discriminate between the *form* and the *content* of art. For its full assimilation this requires reflection, which—either because the philosophy of art does not interest them, or because they are satisfied with previously adopted opinions they do not wish to disturb—not all are willing to accord to it. But the test of a great philosophy, I once heard Tolstoy say, is that the idea it generalizes can be so simply stated that an intelligent boy of twelve approaching the subject free from prejudice can understand it in half-an-hour: and I think both Tolstoy's definition, and his explanation of the need to consider the form of art as a matter distinct from our approval and disapproval of the feeling the artist transmits, will stand that crucial test. They can be put so simply that an unprejudiced boy of twelve can readily understand them.

One must however be on one's guard against confusing the *subject* treated of (a particular event: a murder, a seduction, a marriage—or an object, such as the sea, the sky, a house, a tiger, or a baby) with the *subject-matter of feeling*, which is the real content of a work of art. In Tolstoy's

definition it is a feeling or feelings, and their transitions, that when expressed by an artist, form the subject-matter of art. The events treated of—in a book, a play, a picture, or song —are merely material used in expressing that feeling, and must not themselves be thought of as the subject-matter. The affection of a child for its mother or its dog may be the subject-matter of a work of art, so may an appreciation of the effect of certain arrangements of colours and shapes, the mirth and jollity expressed and inspired by a dance-tune or by the movements of a dance, the feelings of awe produced by the representation of a terrible storm, or any other possible feelings or transitions of feeling: the rage of an excited crowd, the triumph of a victorious nation, the despair of a man ruined or betrayed, or feelings evoked by the play of light and shade, by the delicate bloom of a flower, or by the graceful tracery of a tree seen against a winter sky. When asking oneself whether a certain production is a work of art, one has to consider whether we feel something the artist has felt and caused us to share. If one feels that, it is evident that we have before us a work of art—our own feelings witness to the artist's achievement. Sometimes however the pleasure this union of feeling with the artist—and perhaps with many spectators, auditors or readers—would naturally produce, is infringed by a consciousness that one disapproves of, or disagrees with, the feelings that for the moment have infected us.

For instance, many Irishmen are born orators, and oratory is an art. Suppose one went to two great public meetings, addressed by two really first-rate speakers. Each of these is moved by a genuine and passionate feeling. Each has the gift of arranging his matter admirably and expressing it forcibly and eloquently, and possesses an excellent voice. Each sways his audience to laughter and tears, and plays on their emotions as on an organ, compelling them to sympathize

with his detestation for what he abhors and his enthusiasm for what he prizes. We may feel that we have heard great orations admirably delivered, but the feelings underlying these speeches have clashed with one another. One of the speakers was moved by ardent desire to maintain and intensify an age-long struggle, and repudiates with contumely any idea of union with a section of the population that he hates and despises. He was genuinely moved by the recollection of racial wrongs and sincerely devoted to leaders he regarded as heroes and martyrs; but animosity, hatred, and revenge, possessed his soul. The other orator was moved by a desire to bind up the nation's wounds, to forgive and forget past wrongs, and to see a neighbouring people become a united and peaceful nation at harmony with itself and its neighbours. One might sympathize with either tendency, but it is impossible to sympathize equally with them both, or to close one's eyes to the fact that the welfare of human beings will be influenced by whichever feeling prevails. Tolstoy explains that when we judge whether a certain production (such as one of these speeches) is a work of art, we must remember that our approval or disapproval of a man's purpose or aspiration must have nothing whatever to do with our estimation of the excellence of the *form* in which he presents his subject-matter. To that extent art "has nothing to do with morality." The best and the worst emotions may alike be conveyed with great artistic power and be great works of art, and that is just why art, besides being vastly important, can also be very dangerous.

But when we have seen that a certain production is artistic, and have even perhaps ourselves been touched by it, the question arises whether the "content" (the subject-matter of feeling) dealt with is good, bad, or indifferent. The actions of men flow from their feelings. Their feelings are formed, nurtured, and swayed, by the art they enjoy and

partake of, so that there was much reason for Fletcher of Saltoun to say, "Let me make a nation's songs, and who will may make its laws."

We live in a world in which sane human beings cannot but distinguish between what appears to them abominable and what appears to them admirable. When therefore we are moved by our artists we cannot be indifferent to the effect their works produce.

If art had nothing to do with the feelings of men it would be an empty and insignificant amusement; but all that influences man's feelings affects his work, his conduct, and the society to which he belongs. Yet, obviously, to say that the morality of an artist's aim decides the artistic merit of his work, and that, for instance, a novel must be a fine one because it advocates temperance principles, though people can only be got to read it if they are forced to do so, would show that the speaker had never thought about the matter, or that his artistic perceptions were atrophied.

But we are still not at the end of the matter. Who is to decide what is good and what is bad in the feeling which forms the subject-matter of art? Such judgment must vary from age to age, from land to land, and even from man to man; for while all sane human beings have their approvals and disapprovals, the outlook on life (or what Tolstoy calls "the religious perceptions") guiding such approvals and disapprovals vary greatly.

It comes to this, that the subject-matter of feeling transmitted by artists to those who receive their art is of necessity appraised by us in accordance with our own outlook on life. Tolstoy rightly points out this inevitable contact of art with ethics, but his own ethical standards, his "religious perceptions" are not those generally accepted among us. A discussion of his ethics would be out of place here. Elsewhere I have ventured to join issue with him on some mat-

ters, while on others it seems to me that he made straight the pathway of the Lord.

Now obviously when—passing from the acknowledgment of various productions as works of art because their form is adequate and they achieve their purpose of infecting us with the feelings their creators had experienced—Tolstoy discusses, as a separate matter, whether certain feelings these artists transmitted are beneficial or otherwise, it is inevitable that those who differ from his ethical views should disagree with his conclusions. But this difference as to ethics should not hinder an appreciation of the importance of his understanding of art! He was a great artist, a first-class novelist, dramatist, and story-writer, besides being an amateur musician, keenly interested in painting, sculpture, and other forms of art, and he was also well acquainted with artists of all kinds and with the whole literature of art. Is it not worth our while to understand his message and grasp his meaning clearly before attempting to answer him?

As an example of criticism tending to confuse matters, I will instance this case: after making the broad distinction between the form of art and its subject-matter, Tolstoy passes on to the totally different question of what feelings commended themselves to him. He says he attaches no special importance to the examples he cites but offers them merely to elucidate his meaning. Among books expressing feelings of which he approved, he instances *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* and immediately certain critics pounced upon this, and say that as Mrs. Beecher Stowe did not write as well as someone else whom they mentioned, Tolstoy's example shows that he was incapable of judging about art! Such criticism shows a curious incapacity to understand what is being discussed. Similarly objections to pictures mentioned by Tolstoy as good in subject-matter—on the ground of alleged defects in form—miss the point of the discussion.

When a book deals frankly and plainly with an important subject it is strange that anyone, instead of seeking the gold in the mine, should prefer to search for obscurity, contradiction, over-emphasis, or any ill-advised examples that can be detected; and that some critics should go the length of asserting that the author meant the opposite of what he plainly says.

I do not see why anyone should object to, or disagree with, Tolstoy's explanation of art and of its influence on life; nor with his assertion that when we pass from a consideration of the form of works of art to a consideration of the value of the feelings they convey, our appraisement of these latter is inevitably influenced by our outlook on life. But an important reservation must be made when we come to his assurance that "the religious perception of our time, in its widest and most practical application, is the consciousness that our well-being both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among all men, in their loving harmony with one another," and that "all men of our times already admit that the highest well-being attainable by men is to be reached by their union with one another."

If all men had such a religious perception, there would be a much greater consensus of opinion concerning the value of feelings transmitted by art. But it is just here, it seems to me, that the real clash of opinion and feeling comes in. There are among us many worshippers of Mars, Mammon, Venus and Bacchus (under whatever disguises), and though they may not publicly proclaim or explain their religious perceptions, it is impossible for them honestly to sympathize with what Tolstoy wishes them to approve of. During the last thirty years of his life Tolstoy disapproved of patriotism and of private property. Rudyard Kipling approves of both. Each of these men was an artist in words. The

divergence of their estimates of what is good and what is bad did not prevent them from producing works of art; but neither of them could think that all the feelings with which the other infected his readers were desirable. Before considering the matter, people are sometimes apt to resent the idea that ethical standards vary from place to place or from time to time; or, on realizing that such is the fact, they try to think that it is possible for a sane man to cease to approve or disapprove of anything. It does not however need much experience to perceive that men cannot live in the chaos that results when they have no sort of chart or guide by which to steer their course through life. In other words whether a man is a materialist or a spiritualist, and whatever his aspirations may be, he always, more or less consciously and definitely, has what Tolstoy calls "a religious perception."

In an interesting essay on *Religion and Morality*[1] (1894) Tolstoy classified existing "religious perceptions" in three groups: (1) Selfishness—the religion, for instance, of all the babies who desire as much milk and warmth for themselves as possible, and do not care what happens to the rest of the world; (2) Patriotism—the religion of all who make the welfare of their family, clan, group, or nation (or even, as in the case of the Positivists, the whole of humanity) the chief aim of their life; and (3) those who recognize some supreme Lord or Law, whose service transcends any calculable advantage accruing to themselves or to their group.

There is truth in that classification, but one need only admit it, to realize that appreciation of the feelings conveyed by art *must* differ among us according to whether we adhere to the first, the second, or the third of those groups.

This divergence relating to feelings which are the subject-matter of art, should not extend to what Tolstoy says about the form of art, or its interrelation with the rest of life.

[1] *Essays and Letters*, "World's Classics" series.

Whatever God one worships can be greatly served by means of art.

In an admirable little article on *How to Read the Gospels* (1896) [1] Tolstoy says:

"To understand Christ's real teaching the chief thing is not to interpret the Gospels, but to understand them as they are written. And therefore, to the question how Christ's teaching should be understood, I reply: If you wish to understand it read the Gospels. Read them, putting aside all foregone conclusions; read them with the sole desire to understand what is said there. But read them considerately, reasonably, and with discernment, and not haphazard or mechanically, as though all the words were of equal weight.

"*To understand any book one must choose out the parts that are quite clear, dividing them from what is obscure or confused. And from what is clear we must form our idea of the drift and spirit of the whole work.* Then, on the basis of what we have understood, we may proceed to make out what is confused or not quite intelligible. That is how we read all kinds of books.

"Therefore we must first of all separate what is quite simple and intelligible from what is confused and unintelligible and must afterwards read this clear and intelligible part several times over, trying fully to assimilate it. Then, helped by the comprehension of the general meaning, we can try to explain to ourselves the drift of the parts which seemed involved and obscure. That was how I read the Gospels, and the meaning of Christ's teaching became so clear to me that it was impossible to have any doubts about it. And I advise everyone who wishes to understand the true meaning of Christ's teaching to follow the same plan."

This advice, showing how "all kinds of books" should be read, is particularly applicable to the reading of Tolstoy's *What is Art?* The views there expressed are those of a man born nearly a century ago, who differed widely from ourselves in race, nationality, up-bringing, circumstances, and class,—for he was a Russian nobleman of the old régime. That some of his feelings and ideas should differ from our own was inevitable, but the really remarkable thing is that

[1] *Essays and Letters,* "World's Classics" series.

so much of what he says makes us conscious of oneness with him. He was accustomed to express himself strongly, and assumed that those who read his works would wish to understand them and would not desire to twist his meaning. Those who deal with his work in the way he advised can certainly obtain a clear view of the subject, as he understood it. If what he has said is true, in whole or in part, it is desirable to grasp that truth and, even if he be in error, it is desirable to understand his meaning before attempting any refutation.

In *What is Art?* Tolstoy says:

"I have accomplished to the best of my ability this work which has occupied me for fifteen years, on a subject near to me—that of art. . . . I began to write on art fifteen years ago thinking that when once I undertook the task I should be able to accomplish it without a break. It proved however that my views on the matter were so far from clear that I could not arrange them in a way that satisfied me. From that time I have never ceased to think on the subject, and I have recommenced writing on it six or seven times; but each time, after writing a considerable part of it, I have found myself unable to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion, and have had to put it aside." (p. 321)

That was written in 1897, and the fifteen years mentioned bring us nearly back to the time when his *Confession* was written, and the statement indicates that all the earlier essays in this book, while expressing some part of his thought, fail to elucidate the matter as he desired, and it is only in *What is Art?* that we must look for the final conclusions that solved the matter to his satisfaction.

PART XV

PREFACE TO POLENZ'S NOVEL "DER BÜTTNERBAUER"

W. VON POLENZ was born in 1861 and died in 1903. His novels, *Der Pfarrer von Breitendorf* (1893), *Der Büttnerbauer* (1895), are descriptions of village life. His *Grabenhäger, Thekla Lüdekind* and *Liebe ist ewig* (1900) describe the life of the landowning and town classes. *Wurzellocker* (1902) describes a literary society.

Note by A. M.

"For you will find, if you think deeply of it, that the chief of all the curses of this unhappy age is the universal gabble of its fools, and of the flocks that follow them, rendering the quiet voices of the wise men of all past time inaudible. This is, first, the result of the invention of printing, and of the easy power and extreme pleasure to vain persons of seeing themselves in print. When it took a twelvemonth's hard work to make a single volume legible, men considered a little the difference between one book and another; but now, when not only anybody can get themselves made legible through any quantity of volumes, in a week, but the doing so becomes a means of living to them, and they can fill their stomachs with the foolish foam of their lips, the universal pestilence of falsehood fills the mind of the world as cicadas do olive-leaves, and the first necessity for our mental government is to extricate from among the insectile noise, the few books and words that are Divine."

Ruskin, in *Fors Clavigera,* Letter 81.

Last year a friend of mine, in whose taste I have confidence, gave me a German novel, *Der Büttnerbauer,* by von Polenz to read. I read it and was astonished that such a work, which appeared a couple of years ago, was hardly known by anyone.

This novel is not one of those works of imitation-art that are produced in such enormous quantities in our time, but a really artistic production. It is not one of those descriptions of events and of people, destitute of all interest, which are artificially put together merely because the author, having learned the technique of artistic descriptions, wants to write a new novel; nor is it one of those dissertations on a given theme set in the form of a drama or novel, which also in our day pass as artistic productions: nor does it belong to the class of works called "decadent,"which particularly please the modern public just because, resembling the ravings of a madman, they present something of the nature of rebuses, the guessing of which forms a pleasant occupation, besides being considered a sign of refinement.

This novel belongs neither to the first, nor to the second, nor to the third, of these categories, but is a real work of art, in which the author says what he feels he must say because he loves what he is speaking about, and says it not by reflections or hazy allegories but in the one manner by which an artistic content can be conveyed, by poetic images, not fantastic extraordinary unintelligible images with no essential inner connexion one with another, but by the presentation of the most ordinary simple persons and events united one with another by an inner artistic necessity.

But not only is this novel a genuine work of art, it is also an admirable work of art, uniting in a high degree all the three chief conditions of really good artistic production.

In the first place, its content is important, relating as it does to the life of the peasantry—that is, to the majority of mankind, who stand at the basis of every social structure and in our day, not only in Germany but in all European countries, are enduring trying alterations of their ancient, age-long condition. (It is remarkable that almost simultaneously with *Der Büttnerbauer* there has appeared a French

novel, Réné Bazin's *La Terre qui meurt,* which is not at all bad, though far less artistic.)

In the second place, this novel is written with great mastery, in admirable German, particularly forcible when the author makes his characters speak the coarse peasant-labourer's Plattdeutsch.

In the third place, this novel is thoroughly indued with love of these people whom the author sets before us.

In one of the chapters, for instance, there is a description of how after a night passed in drunkenness with his comrades, the husband, when it is already morning, returns home and knocks at the door. The wife looks out of the window and recognizes him; she loads him with abuse and is purposely slow about letting him in. When at last she opens the door for him, the husband tumbles in and wants to go into the large living-room, but the wife does not let him, lest the children should see their father drunk, and she pushes him back. But he catches hold of the lintel of the door and struggles with her. Usually a mild man, he suddenly becomes terribly exasperated (the cause of his exasperation is that, the day before, she had taken out of his pocket some money his master had given him, and had hidden it) and in his rage he flings himself upon her, seizes her by the hair, and demands his money.

"I won't give it up, I won't give it up for anything!" says she in reply to his demands, trying to free herself from him.

Then he, forgetting himself in his anger, strikes her where and as he can.

"I'll die before I'll give it up!" says she.

"You won't give it up!" he answers, knocking her off her feet and falling on her himself, while continuing to demand his money. Not receiving a reply he, in his mad drunken

anger, wants to throttle her. But the sight of blood which trickles from under her hair and flows over her forehead and nose, causes him to stop. He becomes frightened at what he has done and, letting go of her, staggers and falls down on his bed.

The scene is truthful and terrible. But the author loves his protagonists and adds one small detail which suddenly illuminates everything with such a vivid ray as compels the reader not only to pity, but also to love these people, despite their coarseness and cruelty. The wife who has been beaten comes to herself, rises from the floor, wipes her bleeding head with the hem of her skirt, feels her limbs and, opening the door leading to the crying children, quiets them, and then seeks her husband with her eyes. He is lying on the bed as he has fallen, but his head has slipped from the pillow. The wife walks over to him, carefully raises his head on the pillow, and after that adjusts her dress and picks off some of her hair that had been pulled out.

Dozens of pages of discussions would not have said all that is said by this detail. Here at once the reader is shown the consciousness, educated by tradition, of conjugal duty and the triumph of a decision maintained—not to give up the money needed, not for herself but for the family; here also is the offence, forgiveness of the beating, and pity, and if not love, at least the memory of love for her husband, the father of her children. Nor is that all. Such a detail, illuminating the inner life of this woman and this man, lights up for the reader the inner life of millions of such husbands and wives who have lived or are now living, and not only teaches respect and love for these people who are crushed by toil, but compels us to consider why and wherefore they, strong in soul and body, with such possibilities in them of good loving life, are so neglected, crushed, and ignorant.

And such truly artistic traits, which are revealed only by love of what the author describes, are met with in every chapter of this novel.

It is undoubtedly a beautiful work of art, as all who read it will agree. And yet it appeared three years ago, and, though translated into Russian in the *Messenger of Europe,* has passed unnoticed both in Russia and in Germany. I have asked several literary Germans whom I have met recently about this novel—they had heard Polenz's name but had not read his book, though they had all read the last novels of Zola, the last stories by Kipling, and the plays of Ibsen, d'Annunzio, and even of Maeterlinck.

Some twenty years ago Matthew Arnold wrote an admirable article on the purpose of criticism.[1] In his opinion the purpose of criticism is to find among all that has been written, whenever and wherever it may be, that which is most important and good, and to direct the attention of readers to this that is important and good.

In our time, when readers are deluged with newspapers, periodicals, books, and by the profusion of advertisements, not only does such criticism seem to me essential, but the whole future culture of the educated class of our European world depends on whether such criticism appears and acquires authority.

The over-production of any kind of article is harmful; but the over-production of articles which are not an aim but a means is particularly harmful when people consider this means to be an aim.

Horses and carriages as means of conveyance, clothing and houses as means of protection against changes of weather, good food to maintain the strength of one's organism, are very useful. But as soon as men begin to regard the possession of means as an end in itself, considering it good to

[1] *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,* in *Essays in Criticism.*

have as many horses, clothes, and houses, and as much food as possible, such articles become not only useless but simply harmful. And this has come about with book-production among the well-to-do circle of people of our European society. Printing, which is undoubtedly useful for the great masses of uneducated people, among well-to-do people has long ago become the chief organ for the dissemination of ignorance and not of enlightenment.

It is easy to convince oneself of this. Books, periodicals, and especially newspapers, have become in our time great financial undertakings for the success of which the largest possible number of purchasers is required. But the interests and tastes of the largest number of purchasers are always low and vulgar, and so for the success of the productions of the press it is necessary that these productions should correspond to the demands of this great mass of purchasers, that is, that they should treat of mean interests and correspond to vulgar tastes. And the press fully satisfies these demands, having ample opportunity of doing so since among those who work for the press there are many more with the same mean interests and coarse tastes as the public than there are men with lofty interests and refined taste. And since with the diffusion of printing and the commercial methods applied to newspapers, periodicals, and books, these people receive good pay for matter that they supply corresponding to the demands of the masses, there appears that terrible ever increasing and increasing deluge of printed paper, which by its quantity alone, not to speak of the harmfulness of its contents, forms a vast obstacle to enlightenment.

If in our day a clever young man of the people, wishing to educate himself, is given access to all books, periodicals, and newspapers, and the choice of his reading is left to himself, he will, if he reads for ten years assiduously every

day, in all probability read nothing but stupid and immoral books. It is as improbable that he will strike on a good book as it would be that he should find a marked pea in a bushel of peas. What is worst of all is that, continually reading bad books, he will more and more pervert his understanding and his taste, so that when he does come on a good work he will either be quite unable to understand it or will understand it perversely.

Besides this, thanks to accident or to masterly advertisement, some bad works, such, for instance, as *The Christian* by Hall Caine, a novel false in its content and inartistic, which has been sold to the extent of a million copies, obtains, like Odol or Pears' Soap, a great notoriety not justified by its merits. And this great publicity causes an ever greater and greater number of people to read such books, and the fame of an insignificant, or often harmful, book grows and grows like a snowball, and in the heads of the great majority of men an ever greater and greater confusion of ideas forms, also like a snowball, involving complete incapacity to understand the qualities of literary productions. And therefore in proportion to the greater and greater diffusion of newspapers, periodicals, books, and printing in general, the level of the quality of what is printed falls lower and lower, and the great mass of the so-called educated public is ever more and more immersed in the most hopeless, self-satisfied, and therefore incurable, ignorance.

Within my own memory, during the last fifty years, this striking debasement of the taste and common sense of the reading public has occurred. One may trace this debasement in all branches of literature, but I will indicate only some notable instances best known to me. In Russian poetry, for instance, after Púshkin and Lérmontov (Tyútchev is generally forgotten) poetic fame passes first to the very doubtful

poets, Máykov, Polónski, and Fet, then to Nekrásov, who was quite destitute of the poetic gift, then to the artificial and prosaic versifier, Alexéy Tolstóy, then to the monotonous and weak Nádson, then to the quite ungifted Apúkhtin, and after that everything becomes confused and versifiers appear whose name is legion, who do not even know what poetry is, or the meaning of what they write, or why they write.

Another astonishing example is that of the English prose writers. From the great Dickens we descend, first to George Eliot, then to Thackeray, from Thackeray to Trollope, and then already there begin the indifferent fabrications of Kipling, Hall Caine, Rider Haggard, and so forth. The same thing is yet more striking in American literature. After the great galaxy of Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Whittier and others, suddenly everything crumbles and there appear beautiful publications with beautiful illustrations, but with stories and novels it is impossible to read because of their lack of any content.

In our time the ignorance of the educated crowd has reached such a pass that all the really great thinkers, poets, and prose writers, both of ancient times and of the nineteenth century, are considered obsolete, and no longer satisfy the lofty and refined demands of the new men; it is all regarded with contempt or with a smile of condescension. The immoral, coarse, inflated, disconnected babble of Nietzsche is recognised as the last word of the philosophy of our day, and the senseless artificial arrangements of words in various decadent poems united by measure and rhythm, is regarded as poetry of the highest order. In all the theatres pieces are given the meaning of which is unknown to anyone, even to the authors, and novels that have no content and no artistic merit are printed and circulated by millions, under the guise of artistic productions.

"What shall I read to supplement my education?" asks a young man or girl who has finished his or her studies at the high-school.

The same question is put by a man of the people who has learned to read and to understand what he reads, and is seeking true enlightenment.

To answer such questions the naïve attempts made to interrogate prominent men as to which they consider to be the best hundred books is of course insufficient.

Nor is the matter helped by the classification existing in our European society, and tacitly accepted by all, which divides writers into first, second, and third class, and so on—into those of genius, those who are very talented, and those simply good. Such a division, far from helping a true understanding of the excellences of literature, and the search for what is good amid the sea of what is bad, still more confuses this aim. To say nothing of the fact that this division into classes is often incorrect and maintained only because it was made long ago and is accepted by everybody, such a division is harmful, because writers acknowledged to be first-class have written some very bad things, and writers of the lowest class have produced some excellent things. So that a man who believes in the division of writers into classes, and thinks everything by first-class writers to be admirable, and everything by writers of the lower class or those quite unknown, to be weak, will only become confused, and deprive himself of much that is useful and truly enlightening.

Only real criticism can reply to that most important question of our day, put by the youth of the educated class who seeks education, and by the man of the people who seeks enlightment—not such criticism as now exists, which sets itself the task of praising such works as have obtained notoriety, and devising foggy philosophic-esthetic theories to justify them; and not criticism that makes it its task more or

less wittily to ridicule bad works or works proceeding from a different camp; still less such criticism as has functioned and still functions in Russia, and sets itself the aim of deducing the direction of the movement of our whole society from some types depicted by certain writers, or in general of finding opportunities to express particular economic and political opinions under guise of discussing literary productions.

To that enormously important question, "What, of all that has been written, is one to read?" only real criticism can furnish a reply: criticism which, as Matthew Arnold says, sets itself the task of bringing to the front and pointing out to people all that is best both in former and in contemporary writers.

On whether such disinterested criticism, which understands and loves art and is independent of any party, makes its appearance or not, and on whether its authority becomes sufficiently established for it to be stronger than mercenary advertisement, depends, in my opinion, the decision of the question whether the last rays of enlightenment are to perish in our so-called educated European society without having reached the masses of the people, or whether they will revive, as they did in the Middle Ages, and reach the great mass of the people who are now without any enlightenment.

The fact that the mass of the public do not know of this admirable novel of Polenz's any more than they do of many other admirable works which are drowned in the sea of printed rubbish, while senseless, insignificant, and even simply nasty, literary productions are discussed from every aspect, invariably praised, and sold by millions of copies, has evoked in me these thoughts, and I avail myself of the opportunity, which will hardly present itself to me again, of expressing them, though it be but briefly.

1902.

PART XVI

AN AFTERWORD, BY TOLSTOY, TO CHEKHOV'S STORY, "DARLING"

THERE is profound meaning in the story in the Book of Numbers, which tells how Balak, king of the Moabites, sent for Balaam to curse the people of Israel who had come to his borders. Balak promised Balaam many gifts for his service; and Balaam, being tempted, went to Balak, but was stopped on the way by an angel who was seen by his ass but whom Balaam did not see. In spite of this Balaam went on to Balak and went with him up a mountain, where an altar had been prepared with calves and lambs slaughtered in readiness for the imprecation. Balak waited for the curse to be pronounced, but instead of cursing them Balaam blessed the people of Israel.

Ch. XXIII, v. 11. "And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.

v. 12. "And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord putteth in my mouth?

v. 13. "And Balak said unto him, Come with me unto another place . . . and curse me them from thence."

And he took him to another place, where also altars had been prepared.

But again Balaam, instead of cursing, blessed them.

And so it was a third time.

Chapter XXIV, v. 10. "And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and

thou hast blessed them these three times. Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; and, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." And so Balaam departed without receiving the gifts, because instead of cursing Balak's enemies he had blessed them.

What happened to Balaam very often happens to true poets and artists. Tempted by Balak's promises of popularity, or by false views suggested to them, the poet does not even see the angel that bars his way whom the ass sees, and he wishes to curse but yet he blesses.

This is just what happened with the true poet and artist Chékhov when he wrote his charming story, *Darling*.

The author evidently wanted to laugh at this pitiful creature—as he judged her with his intellect, not with his heart—this "Darling," who, after sharing Kúkin's troubles about his theatre, and then immersing herself in the interests of the timber business, under the influence of the veterinary surgeon considers the struggle against bovine tuberculosis to be the most important matter in the world, and is finally absorbed in questions of grammar and the interests of the little schoolboy in the big cap. Kúkin's name is ridiculous, and so even is his illness and the telegram announcing his death. The timber-dealer with his sedateness is ridiculous, and the veterinary surgeon and the boy are ridiculous; but the soul of "Darling," with her capacity to devote herself with her whole being to the one she loves, is not ridiculous but wonderful and holy.

I think that in the mind though not in the heart of the author when he wrote *Darling*, there was a dim idea of the new woman, of her equality of rights with man; of woman, developed, learned, working independently, as well as man if not better, for the benefit of society; of the woman who has raised and insists upon the woman question; and in beginning to write *Darling* he wanted to show what woman

ought not to be. The Balak of public opinon invited Chékhov to curse the weak, submissive, undeveloped woman, devoted to man, and Chékhov ascended the mountain, and the calves and sheep were laid upon the altar, but when he began to speak, the author blessed what he had meant to curse. I, at any rate, despite the wonderful gay humour of the whole work, cannot read without tears some passages of this beautiful story. I am touched by the description of the complete devotion with which she loved Kúkin and all that he cared for, and also the timber-dealer, and also the veterinary surgeon, and yet more by her sufferings when she was left alone and had no one to love, and by the account of how finally with all the strength of her womanly and motherly feeling (which she had never had the opportunity to expend on children of her own) she devoted her unbounded love to the future man, the school-boy in the big cap.

The author makes her love the ridiculous Kúkin, the insignificant timber-dealer, and the unpleasant veterinary surgeon; but love is not less sacred whether its object be a Kúkin or a Spinoza, a Pascal or a Schiller, whether its object changes as rapidly as in the case of *Darling,* or remains the same for a whole lifetime.

I happened long ago to read in the *Nóvoe Vrémya* an excellent feuilleton by M. Ata about women. In this feuilleton the author expressed a remarkably wise and profound thought. "Women," he says, "try to prove to us that they can do everything we men can do. I not only do not dispute this, but am ready to agree that women can do all that men do and perhaps even do it better, but the trouble is that men cannot do anything even approximately approaching what women can accomplish."

Yes, that is certainly so, and it is true not only of the bearing, nursing, and early education of children, but men cannot do what is loftiest, best, and brings man nearest to

God—the work of loving, of complete devotion to the beloved, which has been so well and naturally done, and is done, and will be done, by good women. What would become of the world, what would become of us men, if women had not that faculty and did not exercise it? Without women doctors, women telegraphists, women lawyers and scientists and authoresses, we might get on, but without mothers, helpers, friends, comforters, who love in man all that is best in him—without such women it would be hard to live in the world. Christ would be without Mary or Magdalene, Francis of Assisi would have lacked Claire, there would have been no wives of the Decembrists in their exile, nor would the Doukhobors have had their wives, who did not restrain their husbands but supported them in their martyrdom for truth There would not have been those thousands and thousands of unknown women—the very best (as the unknown generally are)—comforters of the drunken, the weak, and the dissolute, who more than anyone else need the consolation of love. In that love, whether directed to Kúkin or to Christ, is the chief, grand strength of women, irreplaceable by anything else.

What a wonderful misconception is the whole so-called woman's question, which has obsessed (as is natural with every empty idea) the majority of women and even of men!

"Woman wants to improve herself!" What can be more legitimate or more just than that?

But the business of a woman by her very vocation is different from a man's. And therefore the ideal of perfection for a woman cannot be the same as the ideal for a man. Let us grant that we do not know in what that ideal consists, but in any case it is certainly not the ideal of perfection for a man. And yet to the attainment of that masculine ideal all the absurd and unwholesome activity of the fashionable woman's movement, which now so confuses women, is directed.

I am afraid that Chékhov when writing *Darling* was under the influence of this misunderstanding.

He, like Balaam, intended to curse, but the God of poetry forbade him to do so and commanded him to bless, and he blessed, and involuntarily clothed that sweet creature in such a wonderful radiance that she will always remain a type of what woman can be in order to be happy herself and to cause the happiness of those with whom her fate is united.

This story is so excellent because its effect was unintentional.

I learned to ride a bicycle in the great Moscow riding-school, in which army-divisions are reviewed. At the other end of the riding-school a lady was learning to ride. I thought of how to avoid incommoding that lady and began looking at her. And, looking at her, I began involuntarily to draw nearer and nearer to her, and although she, noticing the danger, hastened to get out of the way, I rode against her and upset her, that is to say, I did exactly the opposite of what I wished to do, simply because I had concentrated my attention upon her.

The same thing has happened with Chékhov, but in an inverse sense: he wanted to knock down "Darling," and directing the close attention of a poet upon her, he has exalted her.

PART XVII

SHAKESPEARE AND THE DRAMA

I

An article by Ernest Howard Crosby [1] on Shakespeare's attitude towards the people has suggested to me the idea of expressing the opinion I formed long ago about Shakespeare's works, an opinion quite contrary to that established throughout the European world. Recalling the struggle with doubts, the pretences, and the efforts to attune myself to Shakespeare, that I went through owing to my complete disagreement with the general adulation, and supposing that many people have experienced and are experiencing the same perplexity, I think it may be of some use definitely and frankly to express this disagreement of mine with the opinion held by the majority, especially as the conclusions I came to on examining the causes of my disagreement are, it seems to me, not devoid of interest and significance.

My disagreement with the established opinion about Shakespeare is not the result of a casual mood or of a light-hearted attitude towards the subject, but it is the result of repeated and strenuous efforts, extending over many years, to harmonise my views with the opinions about Shakespeare accepted throughout the whole educated Christian world.

[1] E. H. Crosby was for some time a member of the New York State Legislature; subsequently he went to Egypt as a judge in the Mixed Tribunals. While there he began reading the works of Tolstoy, which had a great influence upon him. He visited Tolstoy, and afterwards co-operated with him in various ways. In a remarkable essay on "Shakespeare and the Working Classes" E. H. Crosby drew attention to the consistently anti-democratic tendency of that poet's plays. It is to this essay that Tolstoy here refers.—A. M.

I remember the astonishment I felt when I first read Shakespeare. I had expected to receive a great esthetic pleasure, but on reading, one after another, the works regarded as his best, *King Lear, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth,* not only did I not experience pleasure but I felt an insuperable repulsion and tedium, and a doubt whether I lacked sense, since I considered works insignificant and simply bad, which are regarded as the summit of perfection by the whole educated world; or whether the importance that educated world attributed to Shakespeare's works lacks sense. My perplexity was increased by the fact that I have always keenly felt the beauties of poetry in all its forms: why then did Shakespeare's works, recognised by the whole world as works of artistic genius, not only fail to please me, but even seem detestable? I long distrusted my judgment, and to check my conclusions, during fifty years I repeatedly set to work to read Shakespeare in all possible forms—in Russian, in English, and in German in Schlegel's translation, as I was advised to. I read the tragedies, comedies, and historical plays, several times over, and I invariably experienced the same feelings—repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment. Now, before writing this article, as an old man of 75,[1] wishing once more to check my conclusions, I have again read the whole of Shakespeare, including the historical plays, the *Henrys, Troilus and Cressida, The Tempest,* and *Cymbeline,* etc., and have experienced the same feeling still more strongly, no longer with perplexity but with a firm indubitable conviction that the undisputed fame Shakespeare enjoys as a great genius, which makes writers of our time imitate him and readers and spectators, distorting their esthetic and ethical sense, seek non-existent qualities in him, is a great evil—as every falsehood is.

[1] Tolstoy was born in 1828. This essay appeared in 1906, so that Tolstoy began his re-reading of Shakespeare three years before he published the article.

Although I know that the majority of people have such faith in Shakespeare's greatness that on reading this opinion of mine they will not even admit the possibility of its being correct, and will not pay any attention to it, I shall nevertheless try as best I can to show why I think Shakespeare cannot be admitted to be either a great writer of genius, or even an average one.

For this purpose I will take one of the most admired of Shakespeare's dramas—*King Lear*, in enthusiastic praise of which most of the critics agree.

"The tragedy of Lear is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of Shakespeare," says Dr. Johnson. "There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed, which so much agitates our passions and interests our curiosity."

"We wish that we could pass this play over and say nothing about it," says Hazlitt. "All that we can say must fall far short of the subject, or even of what we ourselves conceive of it. To attempt to give a description of the play itself or of its effects upon the mind is mere impertinence; yet we must say something. It is then the best of Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was most in earnest."

"If the originality of invention did not so much stamp almost every play of Shakespeare," says Hallam, "that to name one as the most original seems a disparagement to others, we might say that this great prerogative of genius was exercised above all in Lear. It diverges more from the model of regular tragedy than *Macbeth* or *Othello,* or even more than *Hamlet,* but the fable is better constructed than in the last of these and it displays full as much of the almost superhuman inspiration of the poet as the other two."

"King Lear may be recognised as the perfect model of the dramatic art of the whole world," says Shelley.

"I am not minded to say much of Shakespeare's Arthur";

says Swinburne. "There are one or two figures in the world of his work of which there are no words that would be fit or good to say. Another of these is Cordelia. The place they have in our lives and thoughts is not one for talk. The niche set apart for them to inhabit in our secret hearts is not penetrable by the lights and noises of common day. There are chapels in the cathedral of man's highest art, as in that of his inmost life, not made to be set open to the eyes and feet of the world. Love and Death and Memory keep charge for us in silence of some beloved names. It is the crowning glory of genius, the final miracle and transcendant gift of poetry that it can add to the number of these and engrave on the very heart of our remembrance fresh names and memories of its own creation."

"Lear, c'est l'occasion de Cordelia," says Victor Hugo. "La maternité de la fille sur le père; sujet profonde; la maternité vénérable entre toutes, si admirablement traduite par la légend de cette romaine, nourrice, au fond d'un cachot, de son père veillard. La jeune mammelle près de la barbe blanche, il n'est point de spectacle plus sacré. Cette mammelle filiale c'est Cordelia.

"Une fois cette figure rêvée et trouvée Shakespeare a creé son drame. . . . Shakespeare, portant Cordelia dans sa pensée, a creé cette tragédie comme un dieu, qui ayant une aurore à placer, ferait tout exprès un monde pour l'y mettre." [1]

"In *Lear* Shakespeare's vision sounded the abyss of horror to its very depths, and his spirit showed neither fear, nor giddiness, nor faintness at the sight," says Brandes. "On the

[1] "Lear is the occasion for Cordelia. The daughter's maternity towards the father; profound subject; maternity venerable among all other maternities, so admirably rendered by the legend of that Roman girl, nurse, in the depths of a prison, of her old father. The young breast near the white beard, there is no spectacle more holy. That filial breast is Cordelia.

"Once this figure was dreamed and found Shakespeare created his drama . . . Shakespeare carrying Cordelia in his thoughts, created that tragedy as a god, who having an aurora to place makes a world expressly for it."

threshold of this work, a feeling of awe comes over one, as on the threshold of the Sistine Chapel, with its ceiling-frescoes by Michael Angelo, only that the suffering here is far more intense, the wail wilder, the harmonies of beauty more definitely shattered by the discords of despair."

Such are the judgments of the critics on this drama, and therefore, I think I am justified in choosing it as an example of Shakespeare's best plays.

I will try as impartially as possible to give the contents of the play, and then show why it is not the height of perfection, as it is said to be by the learned critics, but is something quite different.

II

The tragedy of Lear begins with a scene in which two courtiers, Kent and Gloucester, are talking. Kent, pointing to a young man who is present, asks Gloucester whether that is his son. Gloucester says that he has often blushed to acknowledge the young man as his son, but has now ceased to do so. Kent says: "I cannot conceive you." Then Gloucester, in the presence of his son, says: "Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. . . ." He goes on to say that he had another son who was legitimate, but "though this knave came somewhat saucily before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair, there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged."

Such is the introduction. Not to speak of the vulgarity of these words of Gloucester, they are also out of place in the mouth of a man whom it is intended to represent as a noble character. It is impossible to agree with the opinion of some critics that these words are put into Gloucester's mouth to indicate the contempt for illegitimacy from which Edmund suffered. Were that so, it would in the first place have been nec-

essary to make the father express the contempt felt by people in general, and secondly Edmund, in his monologue about the injustice of those who despise him for his birth, should have referred to his father's words. But this is not done, and therefore these words of Gloucester's at the very beginning of the piece, were merely for the purpose of informing the public in an amusing way of the fact that Gloucester has a legitimate and an illegitimate son.

After this trumpets are blown, King Lear enters with his daughters and sons-in-law and make a speech about being aged and wishing to stand aside from affairs and divide his kingdom between his daughters. In order to know how much he should give to each daughter, he announces that to the daughter who tells him she loves him most he will give most. The eldest daughter, Goneril, says that there are no words to express her love, that she loves him "dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty," and she loves him so much that it "makes her breath poor." King Lear immediately allots on the map to this daughter her share, with fields, woods, rivers and meadows, and puts the same question to his second daughter. The second daughter, Regan, says that her sister has correctly expressed her own feelings, but insufficiently. She, Regan, loves her father so that everything is abhorrent to her except his love. The king rewards this daughter also, and asks his youngest, favourite daughter, in whom, according to his expression, "the wine of France and milk of Burgundy strive to be interess'd"—that is, who is courted by the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy—asks Cordelia how she loves him. Cordelia, who personifies all the virtues as the two elder sisters personify all the vices, says quite inappropriately, as if on purpose to vex her father, that though she loves and honours him and is grateful to him, yet, if she marries, her love will not all belong to him, but she will love her husband also.

On hearing these words the king is beside himself, and immediately curses his favourite daughter with most terrible and strange maledictions, saying, for instance, that he will love a man who eats his own children as much as he now loves her who was once his daughter.

> The barbarous Scythian,
> Or he that makes his generation messes
> To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
> Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,
> As thou, my sometime daughter.

The courtier, Kent, takes Cordelia's part, and, wishing to bring the king to reason, upbraids him with his injustice and speaks reasonably about the evil of flattery. Lear, without attending to Kent, banishes him under threat of death, and calling to him Cordelia's two suitors, the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, proposes to each in turn to take Cordelia without a dowry. The Duke of Burgundy says plainly that he will not take Cordelia without a dowry, but the King of France takes her without dowry, and leads her away. After this the elder sisters, there and then conversing with one another, prepare to offend their father who had endowed them. So ends the first scene.

Not to mention the inflated, characterless style in which King Lear—like all Shakespeare's kings—talks, the reader or spectator cannot believe that a king, however old and stupid, could believe the words of the wicked daughters with whom he had lived all their lives, and not trust his favourite daughter, but curse and banish her; therefore the reader or spectator cannot share the feeling of the persons who take part in this unnatural scene.

Scene II begins with Edmund, Gloucester's illegitimate son, soliloquising on the injustice of men who concede rights and respect to a legitimate son but deny them to an illegiti-

mate son, and he determines to ruin Edgar and usurp his place. For this purpose he forges a letter to himself, as from Edgar, in which the latter is made to appear to wish to kill his father. Having waited till Gloucester appears, Edmund, as if against his own desire, shows him this letter, and the father immediately believes that his son Edgar, whom he tenderly loves, wishes to kill him. The father goes away, Edgar enters, and Edmund suggests to him that his father for some reason wishes to kill him. Edgar also at once believes him, and flees from his father.

The relations between Gloucester and his two sons and the feelings of these characters, are as unnatural as Lear's relation to his daughters, if not more so; and therefore it is even more difficult for the spectator to put himself into the mental condition of Gloucester and his sons and to sympathise with them, than it was in regard to Lear and his daughters.

In Scene IV the banished Kent, disguised, so that Lear does not recognise him, presents himself to the king who is now staying with Goneril. Lear asks who he is, to which Kent, one does not know why, replies in a jocular tone quite inappropriate to his position: "A very honest-hearted fellow and as poor as the King." "If thou be'st as poor for a subject as he's for a King, thou art poor enough," replies Lear. "How old art thou?" "Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old as to dote on her for anything," to which the King replies that if he likes him not worse after dinner, he will let him remain in his service.

This talk fits in neither with Lear's position nor with Kent's relation to him, and is evidently put into their mouths only because the author thought it witty and amusing.

Goneril's steward appears and is rude to Lear, for which Kent trips him up. The King, who still does not recognise Kent, gives him money for this, and takes him into his service. After this the fool appears, and a talk begins between the

fool and the King, quite out of accord with the situation, leading to nothing, prolonged, and intended to be amusing. Thus for instance the fool says, "Give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns." The King asks what crowns they shall be. "Why, after I have cut the egg i'the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i'the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt; thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so."

In this manner prolonged conversations go on, producing in the spectator or reader a sense of wearisome discomfort such as one experiences when listening to dull jokes.

This conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Goneril. She demands that her father should diminish his retinue: instead of a hundred courtiers he should be satisfied with fifty. On hearing this proposal Lear is seized with terrible, unnatural rage, and asks:

> Does any here know me? This is not Lear!
> Does Lear walk thus? Speak thus? Where are his eyes?
> Either his notion weakens, his discernings
> Are lethargied. Ha! Waking? 'tis not so,
> Who is it that can tell me who I am?

and so forth.

Meanwhile the fool unceasingly interpolates his humourless jokes. Goneril's husband appears and wishes to appease Lear, but Lear curses Goneril, invoking sterility upon her, or the birth of such a child as would repay with ridicule and contempt her maternal cares, and would thereby show her all the horror and suffering caused by a child's ingratitude.

These words, which express a genuine feeling, might have been touching had only this been said, but they are lost

among long high-flown speeches Lear continually utters quite inappropriately. Now he calls down blasts and fogs on his daughter's head, now desires that curses should "pierce every sense about thee," or addressing his own eyes, says that if they weep he will pluck them out and cast them, with the waters that they lose, "to temper clay."

After this, Lear sends Kent, whom he still does not recognise, to his other daughter, and notwithstanding the despair he has just expressed he talks with the fool and incites him to jests. The jests continue to be mirthless, and besides the unpleasant feeling akin to shame that one feels at unsuccessful witticisms, they are so long-drawn-out as to be wearisome. So for instance the fool asks the King, "Canst thou tell why one's nose stands i' the middle of one's face?" Lear says he does not know.

"Why, to keep one's eyes of either side one's nose: that what a man cannot smell out he may spy into."

"Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?" the fool asks.

"No."

"Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house."

"Why?"

"Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case."

"Be my horses ready?" asks Lear.

"Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason."

"Because they are not eight?" says Lear.

"Yes, indeed; thou wouldst make a good fool," says the fool, and so forth.

After this long scene a gentleman comes and announces that the horses are ready. The fool says:

> She that's a maid now and laughs at my departure,
> Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter,

and goes off.

Scene I of Act II begins with the villain Edmund persuading his brother, when his father enters, to pretend that they are fighting with their swords. Edgar agrees, though it is quite incomprehensible why he should do so. The father finds them fighting. Edgar runs away and Edmund scratches his own arm to draw blood, and persuades his father that Edgar was using charms to kill his father and had wanted Edmund to help him, but that he had refused to do so and Edgar had then thrown himself upon him and wounded him in the arm. Gloucester believes everything, curses Edgar, and transfers all the rights of his elder and legitimate son to the illegitimate Edmund. The Duke of Cornwall, hearing of this, also rewards Edmund.

In Scene II before Gloucester's castle, Lear's new servant Kent, still unrecognised by Lear, begins without any reason to abuse Oswald (Goneril's steward), calling him "a knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; . . . the son and heir of a mongrel bitch," and so on. Then drawing his sword he demands that Oswald should fight him, saying that he will make of him a "sop o' the moonshine," words no commentator has been able to explain, and when he is stopped, he continues to give vent to the strangest abuse, saying, for instance, that he, Oswald, has been made by a tailor, because "a stone-cutter, or a painter, could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two hours at the trade." He also says that, if he is allowed, he will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall of a privy with him.

And in this way Kent, whom nobody recognises,—though both the king and the Duke of Cornwall, as well as Gloucester who is present, should know him well,—continues to brawl, in the character of a new servant of Lear's, until he is seized and put in the stocks.

Scene III takes place on a heath. Edgar, flying from his father's pursuit, hides himself in a tree, and he tells the audience what kinds of lunatics there are, beggars who go about naked, thrust pins and wooden pricks into their bodies, and scream with wild voices and enforce charity, and he says that he intends to play the part of such a lunatic in order to escape from the pursuit. Having told the audience this he goes off.

Scene IV is again before Gloucester's castle. Lear and the fool enter. Lear sees Kent in the stocks and, still not recognising him, is inflamed with anger against those who have dared so to treat his messenger, and he calls for the Duke and Regan. The fool goes on with his queer sayings. Lear with difficulty restrains his anger. The Duke and Regan enter. Lear complains of Goneril, but Regan justifies her sister. Lear curses Goneril and, when Regan tells him he had better go back to her sister, he is indignant and says: "Ask her forgiveness?" and goes on his knees, showing how improper it would be for him abjectly to beg food and clothing as charity from his own daughter, and he curses Goneril with the most terrible curses, and asks who has dared to put his messenger in the stocks. Before Regan can answer Goneril arrives. Lear becomes yet more angry and again curses Goneril, and when he is told that the Duke had ordered the stocks he says nothing, for at this moment Regan tells him that she cannot receive him now and that he had better return with Goneril, and in a month's time she will herself receive him but not with a hundred but with only fifty followers. Lear again curses Goneril and does not want to go with her, still hoping that Regan will receive him with all his hundred followers, but Regan says she will only accept him with twenty-five, and then Lear decides to go back with Goneril who allows fifty. Then, when Goneril says that even twenty-five are too many, Lear utters a long discourse about the

superfluous and sufficient being conditional conceptions, and says that if a man is allowed only as much as is necessary he is no different from a beast. And here Lear, or rather the actor who plays Lear, addresses himself to a finely-dressed woman in the audience, and says that she too does not need her finery, which does not keep her warm. After this he becomes madly angry, says that he will do something terrible to be revenged upon his daughters but will not weep, and so he departs. The noise of a storm that is commencing is heard.

Such is the second Act, full of unnatural occurrences, and still more unnatural speeches not flowing from the speaker's circumstances, and finishing with the scene between Lear and his daughters which might be powerful if it were not overloaded with speeches most naïvely absurd and unnatural and quite inappropriate moreover, put in Lear's mouth. Exceedingly touching would be Lear's vacillations between pride, anger, and hope of concessions from his daughters, were they not spoilt by these verbose absurdities which he utters about being ready to divorce Regan's dead mother should Regan not be glad to see him, or about evoking "fen-sucked fogs" to infect his daughter, or about the heavens being obliged to protect old men as they themselves are old, and much else.

Act III begins with thunder, lightning, and storm—a special kind of storm such as there never was before, as one of the characters in the play says. On the heath a gentleman tells Kent that Lear, expelled by his daughters from their houses, is wandering about the heath alone, tearing his hair and throwing it to the winds, and that only the fool is with him. Kent tells the gentleman that the Dukes have quarrelled, and that a French army has landed at Dover, and having communicated this, he despatches the gentleman to Dover to meet Cordelia.

Scene II of Act III also takes place on the heath. Lear

walks about the heath and utters words intended to express despair: he wishes the winds to blow so hard that they (the winds) should crack their cheeks, and that the rain should drench everything, and that the lightning should singe his white head and thunder strike the earth flat and destroy all the germs "that make ingrateful man!" The fool keeps uttering yet more senseless words. Kent enters. Lear says that, for some reason, in this storm all criminals shall be discovered and exposed. Kent, still not recognised by Lear, persuades Lear to take shelter in a hovel. The fool thereupon utters a prophecy quite unrelated to the situation, and they all go off.

Scene III is again transferred to Gloucester's castle. Gloucester tells Edmund that the French king has already landed with an army and intends to help Lear. On learning this, Edmund decides to accuse his father of treason in order to supplant him.

Scene IV is again on the heath in front of the hovel. Kent invites Lear to enter the hovel, but Lear replies that he has no reason to shelter himself from the storm, that he does not feel it as the tempest in his mind, aroused by his daughter's ingratitude, overpowers all else. This true feeling, if expressed in simple words, might evoke sympathy, but amid his inflated and incessant ravings it is hard to notice it and it loses its significance.

The hovel to which Lear is led turns out to be the same that Edgar has entered disguised as a madman, that is to say, without clothes. Edgar comes out of the hovel and, though they all know him, nobody recognises him any more than they recognise Kent, and Edgar, Lear, and the fool, begin to talk nonsense which continues with intervals for six pages. In the midst of this scene Gloucester enters (who also fails to recognise either Kent or his own son Edgar), and tells them how his son Edgar wished to kill him.

This scene is again interrupted by one in Gloucester's castle, during which Edmund betrays his father and the Duke declares he will be revenged on Gloucester. The scene again shifts to Lear. Kent, Edgar, Gloucester, Lear, and the fool, are in a farm-house and are talking. Edgar says: "Frateretto calls me and tells me, Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. . . ." The fool says: "Nuncle, tell me, whether a madman be a gentleman, or a yeoman?" Lear, who is out of his mind, says that a madman is a king. The fool says: "No, he's a yeoman, that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman, that sees his son a gentleman before him." Lear cries out: "To have a thousand with red burning spits come hissing in upon them." And Edgar shrieks that the foul fiend bites his back. Then the fool utters an adage that one cannot trust "the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath." Then Lear imagines that he is trying his daughters. "Most learned justicer," says he addressing the naked Edgar. "Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes!" To this Edgar says:

> Look, where he stands and glares!
> Wantonest thou eyes at trial, madam?
> Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me!

and the fool sings:

> Her boat hath a leak,
> And she must not speak
> Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edgar again says something, and Kent begs Lear to lie down, but Lear continues his imaginary trial.

> Bring in the evidence.
> Thou robed man of justice, take thy place; (*to Edgar*)
> And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, (*to the fool*)

> Bench by his side. You are of the commission, (*to Kent*)
> Sit you too.

"Pur! the cat is grey," cries Edgar.

"Arraign her first; 't is Goneril," says Lear. "I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor King her father."

> *Fool:* Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril? (*addressing a joint-stool*)
> *Lear:* And here's another. . . . Stop her there!
> Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
> False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

and so on.

This raving ends by Lear falling asleep, and Gloucester persuading Kent, still without recognising him, to take the King to Dover. Kent and the fool carry Lear off.

The scene changes to Gloucester's castle. Gloucester himself is accused of treason, and is brought in and bound. The Duke of Cornwall tears out one of his eyes and stamps on it. Regan says that one eye is still whole and that this healthy eye is laughing at the other eye, and urges the Duke to crush it too. The Duke wishes to do so, but for some reason one of the servants suddenly takes Gloucester's part and wounds the Duke. Regan kills the servant. The servant dies and tells Gloucester that he has still one eye to see that the evil-doer is punished. The Duke says: "Lest it see more, prevent it: out, vile jelly!" and tears out Gloucester's other eye and throws it on the floor. Here Regan mentions that Edmund has denounced his father, and Gloucester suddenly understands that he has been deceived and that Edgar did not wish to kill him.

This ends the third Act. Act IV is again in the open country. Edgar, still in the guise of a maniac, talks in artificial language about the perversities of fate and the advan-

tages of a humble lot. Then, curiously enough, to the very spot on the open heath where he is comes his father, blind Gloucester, led by an old man, and he too talks about the perversities of fate in that curious Shakespearean language the chief peculiarity of which is that the thoughts arise either from the sound of the words, or by contrast. He tells the old man who leads him to leave him. The old man says that without eyes one cannot go alone, because one cannot *see* the way. Gloucester says:

"I have no way, and therefore want no *eyes*."

And he argues that he stumbled when he *saw* and that our defects often save us.

"Ah! dear son Edgar," adds he,

> The food of thy abused father's wrath.
> Might I but live to *see* thee in my touch,
> I'd say I had eyes again!

Edgar, naked, in the character of a lunatic, hears this, but does not disclose himself; he takes the place of the old man who had acted as guide, and talks with his father, who does not recognise his voice and believes him to be a madman. Gloucester takes the opportunity to utter a witticism about "when madmen lead the blind," and insists on driving away the old man, obviously not from motives which might be natural to him at that moment, but merely, when left alone with Edgar, to enact an imaginary leap over the cliff. Edgar, though he has only just seen his blinded father and learned that he repents of having driven him away, utters quite unnecessary sayings, which Shakespeare might know, having read them in Harsnet's book,[1] but which Edgar had no means of becoming acquainted with, and which, above all, it is quite

[1] A Declaration of egregious popish impostures, etc.," by Dr. Samuel Harsnet, London 1603, which contains almost all that Edgar says in his feigned madness.—A. M.

unnatural for him to utter in his then condition. He says:

"Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once: of lust, as Obidicut; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; and Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing, who since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women."

On hearing these words, Gloucester gives Edgar his purse saying:

> That I am wretched
> Makes thee the happier. Heavens, deal so still!
> Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man
> That braves your ordinance, that will not see
> Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;
> So distribution should undo excess,
> And each man have enough.

Having uttered these strange words, the blind Gloucester demands that Edgar should lead him to a cliff that he does not himself know, but that hangs over the sea, and they depart.

Scene II of Act IV takes place before the Duke of Albany's palace. Goneril is not only cruel but also dissolute. She despises her husband, and discloses her love to the villain. Edmund, who has obtained his father's title of Gloucester. Edmund goes away, and a conversation takes place between Goneril and her husband. The Duke of Albany, the only character who shows human feelings, has already grown dissatisfied with his wife's treatment of her father and now definitely takes Lear's part, but he expresses himself in words which destroy one's belief in his feelings. He says that a bear would lick Lear's reverence, and that if the heavens do not send their visible spirits to tame these vile offences, humanity must prey on itself like monsters, and so forth.

Goneril does not listen to him, and he then begins to denounce her.

He says:

> See thyself, devil!
> Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
> So horrid, as in woman.

"O vain fool!" says Goneril.

> Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
> Be-monster not thy feature. Were it my fitness
> To let these hands obey my blood,
> They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
> Thy flesh and bones:—Howe'er thou art a fiend,
> A woman's shape doth shield thee,

continues the Duke.

After this a messenger enters and announces that the Duke of Cornwall, wounded by a servant while he was tearing out Gloucester's eyes, has died. Goneril is glad, but already anticipates with fear that Regan, being now a widow, will snatch Edmund from her. This ends the second scene.

Scene III of Act IV represents the French camp. From a conversation between Kent and a gentleman, the reader or spectator learns that the King of France is not in the camp and that Cordelia has received a letter from Kent and is greatly grieved by what she learns about her father. The gentleman says that her face reminded one of sunshine and rain.

> Her smiles and tears
> Were like a better day: Those happy smilets,
> That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
> What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
> As pearls from diamonds dropp'd,

and so forth. The gentleman says that Cordelia desires to see her father, but Kent says that Lear is ashamed to see the daughter he has treated so badly.

In Scene IV Cordelia, talking with a physician, tells him that Lear has been seen, and that he is quite mad, wearing on his head a wreath of various weeds and roaming about, and that she has sent soldiers to find him, and she adds the wish that all secret medicinal virtues of the earth may spring to him in her tears, and so forth.

She is told that the forces of the Dukes are approaching; but she is only concerned about her father, and goes off.

In Scene V of Act IV, which is in Gloucester's castle, Regan talks with Oswald, Goneril's steward, who is carrying a letter from Goneril to Edmund, and tells him that she also loves Edmund and that as she is a widow it is better for her to marry him than for Goneril to do so, and she asks Oswald to persuade her sister of this. Moreover she tells him that it was very unwise to put out Gloucester's eyes and yet to let him live, and therefore she advises Oswald, if he meets Gloucester, to kill him, and promises him a great reward if he does so.

In Scene VI Gloucester again appears with his unrecognised son Edgar, who, now dressed as a peasant, is leading his father to the cliff. Gloucester is walking along on level ground, but Edgar assures him that they are with difficulty ascending a steep hill. Gloucester believes this. Edgar tells his father that the noise of the sea is audible; Gloucester believes this also. Edgar stops on a level place and assures his father that he has ascended the cliff and that below him is a terrible abyss, and he leaves him alone. Gloucester, addressing the gods, says that he shakes off his affliction as he could not bear it longer without condemning them, the gods, and having said this he leaps on the level ground and falls, imagining that he has jumped over the cliff. Edgar thereupon utters to himself a yet more confused phrase:

> And yet I know not how conceit may rob
> The treasury of life, when life itself

Yields to the theft; had he been where he thought,
By this had thought been past,

and he goes up to Gloucester pretending to be again a different man, and expresses astonishment at the latter not having been killed by his fall from such a dreadful height. Gloucester believes that he has fallen, and prepares to die, but he feels that he is alive, and begins to doubt having fallen. Then Edgar assures him that he really did jump from a terrible height, and says that the man who was with him at the top was a fiend, for he had eyes like two full moons, and a thousand noses, and wavy horns.

Gloucester believes this, and is persuaded that his despair was caused by the devil, and therefore decides that he will despair no longer but will quietly await death. Just then Lear enters, for some reason all covered with wild flowers. He has gone mad, and utters speeches yet more meaningless than before. He talks about coining money, about a bow, calls for a clothier's yard, then he cries out that he sees a mouse which he wishes to entice with a piece of cheese, and then he suddenly asks the password of Edgar, who at once replies with the words, "Sweet Marjoram." Lear says, "Pass!" and the blind Gloucester, who did not recognise his son's or Kent's, recognises the King's voice.

Then the King, after his disconnected utterances, suddenly begins to speak ironically about flatterers who said "ay and no" like the theologians and assured him that he could do everything, but when he got into a storm without shelter, he saw that this was not true; and then he goes on to say that as all creatures are wanton, and as Gloucester's bastard son was kinder to his father than his own daughters had been to him (though Lear, according to the course of the play, could know nothing of Edmund's treatment of Gloucester), therefore let copulation thrive, especially as he, a King, lacks soldiers. And thereupon he addresses an imaginary, hypocritically

virtuous lady who acts the prude while at the same time, like an animal in heat, she is addicted to lust. All women "but to the girdle do the gods inherit. Beneath is all the fiend's . . . " and saying this Lear screams and spits with horror. This monologue is evidently meant to be addressed by actor to audience, and probably produces an effect on the stage, but is quite uncalled for in the mouth of Lear—as is his desire to wipe his hand because it "smells of mortality" when Gloucester wishes to kiss it. Then Gloucester's blindness is referred to, which gives an opportunity for a play of words on eyes and Cupid's blindness, and for Lear to say that Gloucester has "no eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a *heavy* case, your purse in a *light.*" Then Lear declaims a monologue on the injustice of legal judgment, which is quite out of place in his mouth seeing that he is insane. Then a gentleman enters with attendants sent by Cordelia to fetch her father. Lear continues to behave madly and runs away. The gentleman sent to fetch Lear does not run after him but continues to tell Edgar lengthily about the position of the French and the British armies.

Oswald enters and, seeing Gloucester and wishing to obtain the reward promised by Regan, attacks him; but Edgar, with his stave, kills Oswald, who when dying gives Edgar (the man who has killed him) Goneril's letter to Edmund, the delivery of which will earn a reward. In this letter Goneril promises to kill her husband and marry Edmund. Edgar drags out Oswald's body by the legs, and then returns and leads his father away.

Scene VII of Act IV takes place in a tent in the French camp. Lear is asleep on a bed. Cordelia enters with Kent, still in disguise. Lear is awakened by music and, seeing Cordelia, does not believe she is alive but thinks her an apparition, and does not believe that he is himself alive. Cor-

delia assures him that she is his daughter, and begs him to bless her. He goes on his knees before her, begs forgiveness, admits himself to be old and foolish, and says he is ready to take poison, which he thinks she probably has prepared for him, as he is persuaded that she must hate him.

> For your sisters
> Have, as I do remember, done me wrong;
> You have some cause, they have not.

Then little by little he comes to his senses and ceases to rave. His daughter suggests that he should take a little walk. He consents and says:

> You must bear with me:
> Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

They go off. The gentleman and Kent, who remain on the scene, talk in order to explain to the audience that Edmund is at the head of the forces and that a battle must soon begin between Lear's defenders and his enemies. So Act IV ends.

In this Fourth Act the scene between Lear and his daughter might have been touching had it not been preceded in three previous acts by the tedious monotonous ravings of Lear, and also had it been the final scene expressing his feelings, but it is not the last.

In Act V Lear's former cold pompous artificial ravings are repeated, destroying the impression the preceding scene might have produced.

Scene I of Act V shows us Edmund and Regan (who is jealous of her sister and offers herself to Edmund). Then Goneril comes on with her husband and soldiers. The Duke of Albany, though he pities Lear, considers it his duty to fight against the French who have invaded his country, and so prepares himself for battle.

Then Edgar enters, still disguised, and hands the Duke of

Albany the letter, and says that if the Duke wins the battle he should let a herald sound a trumpet, and then (this is 800 years B. C.) a champion will appear who will prove that the contents of the letter are true.

In Scene II Edgar enters leading his father, whom he seats by a tree, and himself goes off. The sounds of a battle are heard, Edgar runs back and says that the battle is lost; Lear and Cordelia are prisoners. Gloucester is again in despair. Edgar, still not disclosing himself to his father, tells him that he should not despair, and Gloucester at once agrees with him.

Scene III opens with a triumphal progress of Edmund the victor. Lear and Cordelia are prisoners. Lear, though he is now no longer insane, still utters the same sort of senseless, inappropriate words, as, for instance, that in prison with Cordelia,

> We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage,
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
> And ask of thee forgiveness.

(This kneeling down comes three times over.) He also says that when they are in prison they will wear out poor rogues and "sects of great ones that ebb and flow by the moon," that he and she are sacrifices upon which "the gods throw incense," that "he that parts them shall bring a brand from heaven, and fire us hence like foxes" and that

> The good years shall devour them, flesh and fell,
> Ere they shall make us weep,

and so forth.

Edmund orders Lear and his daughter to be led away to prison, and having ordered a captain to do them some hurt, asks him whether he will fulfil it. The captain replies "I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats; but if it be man's

work I will do it." The Duke of Albany, Goneril, and Regan enter. The Duke wishes to take Lear's part, but Edmund opposes this. The sisters intervene and begin to abuse each other, being jealous of Edmund. Here everything becomes so confused that it is difficult to follow the action. The Duke of Albany wants to arrest Edmund, and tells Regan that Edmund had long ago entered into guilty relations with his wife and that therefore Regan must give up her claim on Edmund, and if she wishes to marry should marry him, the Duke of Albany.

Having said this, the Duke challenges Edmund and orders the trumpet to be sounded, and if no one appears intends himself to fight him.

At this point Regan, whom Goneril has evidently poisoned, writhes with pain. Trumpets are sounded and Edgar enters with a visor which conceals his face, and without giving his name challenges Edmund. Edgar abuses Edmund; Edmund casts back all the abuse on Edgar's head. They fight and Edmund falls. Goneril is in despair.

The Duke of Albany shows Goneril her letter. Goneril goes off.

Edmund while dying recognises that his opponent is his brother. Edgar raises his visor and moralises to the effect that for having an illegitimate son, Edmund, his father has paid with the loss of his sight. After this Edgar tells the Duke of Albany of his adventures and that he has only now, just before coming to this combat, disclosed himself to his father, and his father could not bear it and died of excitement. Edmund, who is not yet dead, asks what else happened.

Then Edgar relates that while he was sitting by his father's body a man came, embraced him closely, cried out as if he would burst heaven, threw himself on his father's corpse, and told a most piteous tale about Lear and himself, and having

told it "the strings of life began to crack," but just then the trumpet sounded twice and he, Edgar, left him "tranced." And this was Kent. Before Edgar had finished telling this story a gentleman runs in with a bloody knife, shouting, "Help!" To the question "Who has been killed?" the gentleman says that Goneril is dead, who had poisoned her sister. She had confessed this. Kent enters, and at this moment the bodies of Regan and Goneril are brought in. Edmund thereupon says that evidently the sisters loved him greatly, as the one had poisoned the other and then killed herself for his sake. At the same time he confesses that he had given orders to kill Lear and hang Cordelia in prison, under the pretence that she had committed suicide; but that he now wishes to prevent this, and having said so, he dies and is carried out.

After this Lear enters with Cordelia's dead body in his arms (though he is over eighty years of age and ill). And again there begin his terrible ravings which make one feel as ashamed as one does when listening to unsuccessful jokes. Lear demands that they should all howl, and alternately believes that Cordelia is dead and that she is alive. He says:

> Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
> That heaven's vault should crack.

Then he recounts how he has killed the slave who hanged Cordelia. Next he says that his eyes see badly, and thereupon recognises Kent whom all along he had not recognised.

The Duke of Albany says that he resigns his power as long as Lear lives, and that he will reward Edgar and Kent and all who have been true to him. At that moment news is brought that Edmund has died; and Lear, continuing his ravings, begs that they will undo one of his buttons, the same request he made when he was roaming about the heath. He

expresses his thanks for this, tells them all to look somewhere, and with these words he dies.

In conclusion the Duke of Albany, who remains alive, says:

> The weight of this sad time we must obey;
> Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
> The oldest hath borne most: we that are young
> Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

All go off to the sound of a dead march. This ends Act V of the play.

III

Such is this celebrated play. Absurd as it may appear in this rendering (which I have tried to make as impartial as possible), I can confidently say that it is yet more absurd in the original. To any man of our time, were he not under the hypnotic influence of the suggestion that this play is the height of perfection, it would be enough to read it to the end, had he patience to do so, to convince himself that far from being the height of perfection it is a very poor, carelessly constructed work which, if it may have been of interest to a certain public of its own day, can among us evoke nothing but aversion and weariness. And any man of our day free from such suggestion would receive just the same impression from the other much praised dramas of Shakespeare, not to speak of the absurd dramatised tales, *Pericles, Twelfth Night, The Tempest, Cymbeline,* and *Troilus and Cressida.*

But such free-minded people, not pre-disposed to Shakespeare worship, are no longer to be found in our time and in our Christian society. Into every man of our society and time, from an early period of his conscious life, has been instilled the idea that Shakespeare is a poetic and dramatic genius and that all his works are the height of perfection.

And therefore, superfluous as it would seem, I will try to indicate in the play of *King Lear* which I have chosen, the defects characteristic of all Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies, as a result of which they not only fail to furnish models of dramatic art but fail to satisfy the most elementary and generally recognised requirements of art.

According to the laws laid down by those very critics who extol Shakespeare, the conditions of every tragedy are that the persons who appear should, as a result of their own characters, actions, and the natural movement of events, be brought into conditions in which, finding themselves in opposition to the world around them, they should struggle with it and in that struggle display their inherent qualities.

In the tragedy of *King Lear* the persons represented are indeed externally placed in opposition to the surrounding world and struggle against it. But the struggle does not result from a natural course of events and from their own characters, but is quite arbitrarily arranged by the author, and therefore cannot produce on the reader that illusion which constitutes the chief condition of art. Lear is under no necessity, and has no reason, to resign his power. And having lived all their lives with his daughters he also has no reason to believe the words of the two elder, and not to believe the truthful statement of the youngest; yet on this the whole tragedy of his position is built.

Equally unnatural is the secondary and very similar plot: the relation of Gloucester to his sons. The position of Gloucester and Edgar arises from the fact that Gloucester, just like Lear, immediately believes the very grossest deception, and does not even try to ask the son who had been deceived, whether the accusation against him is true, but curses him and drives him away.

The fact that the relation of Lear to his daughters is just the same as that of Gloucester to his sons, makes one feel even

more strongly that they are both arbitrarily invented and do not flow from the characters or the natural course of events. Equally unnatural and obviously invented is the fact that all through the play Lear fails to recognise his old courtier, Kent; and so the relations of Lear and Kent fail to evoke the sympathy of reader or hearer. This applies in an even greater degree to the position of Edgar, whom nobody recognises, who acts as guide to his blind father and persuades him that he has leapt from a cliff when Gloucester has really jumped on level ground.

These positions in which the characters are quite arbitrarily placed are so unnatural that the reader or spectator is unable either to sympathise with their sufferings or even to be interested in what he reads or hears. That in the first place.

Secondly, there is the fact that both in this and in Shakespeare's other dramas all the people live, think, speak, and act, quite out of accord with the given period and place. The action of *King Lear* takes place 800 years B. C., and yet the characters in it are placed in conditions possible only in the Middle Ages: Kings, dukes, armies, illegitimate children, gentlemen, courtiers, doctors, farmers, officers, soldiers, knights in armour, and so on, appear in it. Perhaps such anachronisms (of which all Shakespeare's plays are full) did not infringe the possibility of illusion in the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th, but in our time it is no longer possible to interest oneself in the development of events one knows could not have occurred in the conditions the author describes in detail.

The artificiality of the positions, which do not arise from a natural course of events and from the characters of the people engaged, and their incompatibility with the period and the place, is further increased by the coarse embellishments Shakespeare continually makes use of in passages meant to be specially touching. The extraordinary storm during

which Lear roams about the heath, or the weeds which for some reason he puts on his head, as Ophelia does in *Hamlet,* or Edgar's attire—all these effects, far from strengthening the impression, produce a contrary effect. *"Man sieht die Absicht und man wird verstimmt"* [1] as Goethe says. It often happens—as for instance with such obviously intentional effects as the dragging out of half-a-dozen corpses by the legs, with which Shakespeare often ends his tragedies—that instead of feeling fear and pity one feels the absurdity of the thing.

IV

But not only are the characters in Shakespeare's plays placed in tragic positions which are quite impossible, do not result from the course of events, and are inappropriate to the period and the place, but they also behave in a way not in accord with their own definite characters and that is quite arbitrary. It is customary to assert that in Shakespeare's dramas character is particularly well expressed, and that with all his vividness his people are as many-sided as real people, and that while exhibiting the nature of a certain given individual they also show the nature of man in general. It is customary to say that Shakespeare's delineation of character is the height of perfection. This is asserted with great confidence and repeated by everyone as an indisputable verity, but much as I have tried to find confirmation of this in Shakespeare's dramas, I have always found the reverse.

From the very beginning of reading any of Shakespeare's plays I was at once convinced that it was perfectly evident that he is lacking in the chief, if not the sole, means of portraying character, which is individuality of language—that each person should speak in a way suitable to his own char-

[1] "One sees the intention and one is put off."

acter. That is lacking in Shakespeare. All his characters speak, not a language of their own but always one and the same Shakespearean, affected, unnatural language, which not only could they not speak, but which no real people could ever have spoken anywhere.

No real people could speak, or could have spoken, as Lear does—saying that, "I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb" if Regan did not receive him, or telling the winds to "crack your cheeks," or bidding "the wind blow the earth into the sea," or "swell the curl'd waters 'bove the main," as the gentleman describes what Lear said to the storm, or that it is easier to bear one's griefs and "the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip, when grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship" ("bearing" meaning suffering), that Lear is "childed, as I father'd," as Edgar says, and so forth—unnatural expressions such as overload the speeches of the people in all Shakespeare's dramas.

But it is not only that the characters all talk as no real people ever talked or could talk; they are also all afflicted by a common intemperance of language.

In love, preparing for death, fighting or dying, they all talk at great length and unexpectedly about quite irrevelant matters, guided more by the sound of the words and by puns than by the thoughts.

And they all talk alike. Lear raves just as Edgar does when feigning madness. Kent and the fool both speak alike. The words of one person can be put into the mouth of another, and by the character of the speech it is impossible to know who is speaking. If there is a difference in the speech of Shakespeare's characters, it is only that Shakespeare makes different speeches for his characters, and not that they speak differently.

Thus Shakespeare always speaks for his kings in one and the same inflated, empty language. Similarly all his women

who are intended to be poetic, speak the same pseudo-sentimental Shakespearean language: Juliet, Desdemona, Cordelia, and Mariana. In just the same way also it is Shakespeare who always speaks for his villains: Richard, Edmund, Iago, and Macbeth—expressing for them those maligant feelings which villains never express. And yet more identical is the talk of his madmen, with their terrible words, and the speeches of his fools with their mirthless witticisms.

So that the individual speech of living people—that individual speech which in drama is the chief means of presenting character—is lacking in Shakespeare. (If gesture is also a means of expressing character, as in the ballet, it is only a subsidiary means.) If the characters utter whatever comes to hand and as it comes to hand and all in one and the same way, as in Shakespeare, even the effect of gesture is lost; and therefore whatever blind worshippers of Shakespeare may say, Shakespeare does not show us characters.

Those persons who in his dramas stand out as characters, are characters borrowed by him from earlier works which served as the bases of his plays, and they are chiefly depicted, not in the dramatic manner which consists of making each person speak in his own diction, but in the epic manner, by one person describing the qualities of another.

The excellence of Shakespeare's depiction of character is asserted chiefly on the ground of the characters of Lear, Cordelia, Othello, Desdemona, Falstaff, and Hamlet. But these characters, like all the others, instead of belonging to Shakespeare, are taken by him from previous dramas, chronicles, and romances. And these characters were not merely not strengthened by him, but for the most part weakened and spoilt. This is very evident in the drama of King Lear which we are considering, and which was taken by Shakespeare from the play of *King Leir* by an unknown author. The characters of this drama, such as Lear himself and in par-

ticular Cordelia, were not only not created by Shakespeare, but have been strikingly weakened by him and deprived of personality, as compared with the older play.

In the older play Leir resigns his power because, having become a widower, he thinks only of saving his soul. He asks his daughters about their love for him in order, by means of a cunning device, to keep his youngest and favourite daughter with him on his island. The two eldest are betrothed, while the youngest does not wish to contract a loveless marriage with any of the neighbouring suitors Leir offers her, and he is afraid she may marry some distant potentate.

The device he has planned, as he explains to his courtier Perillus (Shakespeare's Kent), is this: that when Cordelia tells him that she loves him more than anyone, or as much as her elder sisters do, he will say that in proof of her love she must marry a prince he will indicate on his island.

All these motives of Lear's conduct are lacking in Shakespeare's play. Then, when (according to the older play) Leir asks his daughters about their love for him, Cordelia does not reply (as Shakespeare has it) that she will not give her father all her love but will also love her husband if she marries—to say which is quite unnatural—but simply says that she cannot express her love in words but hopes her actions will prove it. Goneril and Regan make remarks to the effect that Cordelia's answer is not an answer, and that their father cannot quietly accept such indifference. So that in the older play there is an explanation, lacking in Shakespeare, of Leir's anger at the youngest daughter's reply. Leir is vexed at the non-success of his cunning device, and the venomous words of his elder daughters add to his irritation. After the division of his kingdom between the two eldest daughters in the older play comes a scene between Cordelia and the King of Gaul which, instead of the impersonal Shakespearean Cordelia, presents us with a very definite and at-

tractive character in the truthful, tender, self-denying youngest daughter. While Cordelia, not repining at being deprived of a share in the inheritance, sits grieving that she has lost her father's love and looking forward to earning her bread by her own toil, the King of Gaul enters, who in the disguise of a pilgrim wishes to choose a bride from among Leir's daughters. He asks Cordelia the cause of her grief. She tells him her woe. He, having fallen in love with her, in his pilgrim guise woos her for the King of Gaul, but Cordelia says she will only marry a man she loves. Then the pilgrim offers her his hand and heart, and Cordelia confesses that she loves him and, notwithstanding the poverty and privation that she thinks awaits her, agrees to marry him. Then the pilgrim discloses to her that he is himself the King of Gaul, and Cordelia marries him.

Instead of this scene Lear, according to Shakespeare, proposes to Cordelia's two suitors to take her without dowry, and one cynically refuses, while the other takes her without our knowing why.

After this in the older play, as in Shakespeare, Leir undergoes insults from Goneril to whose house he has gone, but he bears these insults in a very different way from that represented by Shakespeare: he feels that by his conduct to Cordelia he has deserved them, and he meekly submits. As in Shakespeare so also in the older play, the courtier, Perillus (Kent) who has taken Cordelia's part and has therefore been punished, comes to Leir, only not disguised, but simply as a faithful servant who does not abandon his King in a moment of need, and assures him of his love. Leir says to him what in Shakespeare Lear says to Cordelia in the last scene—that if his daughters whom he has benefited hate him, surely one to whom he has done evil cannot love him. But Perillus (Kent) assures the King of his love, and Leir, pacified goes on to Regan. In the older play there are no tempests

or tearing out of grey hairs, but there is a weakened old Leir, overpowered by grief and humbled, and driven out by his second daughter also, who even wishes to kill him. Turned out by his eldest daughters, Leir in the older play, as a last resource, goes with Perillus to Cordelia. Instead of the unnatural expulsion of Leir during a tempest and his roaming about the heath, in the old play Leir with Perillus during their journey to France very naturally come to the last degree of want. They sell their clothes to pay for the sea-crossing, and exhausted by cold and hunger they approach Cordelia's house in fishermen's garb. Here again, instead of the unnatural conjoint ravings of the fool, Lear, and Edgar, as presented by Shakespeare, we have in the older play a natural scene of the meeting between the daughter and father. Cordelia—who notwithstanding her happiness has all the time been grieving about her father and praying God to forgive her sisters who have done him so much wrong—meets him, now in the last stage of want, and wishes immediately to disclose herself to him, but her husband advises her not to do so for fear of agitating the weak old man. She agrees and takes Leir into her house, and without revealing herself to him takes care of him. Leir revives little by little, and then the daughter asks him who he is, and how he lived formerly. If, says Leir,

> . . . from the first I should relate the cause,
> I would make a heart of adamant to weep.
> And thou, poor soul,
> Kind-hearted as thou art,
> Dost weep already ere I do begin.

Cordelia replies:

> For God's love tell it, and when you have done,
> I'll tell the reason why I weep so soon.

And Leir relates all he has suffered from his elder daughters, and says that he now wishes to find shelter with the one who would be right should she condemn him to death. "If, however," he says, "she will receive me with love, it will be God's and her work, and not my merit!" To this Cordelia replies, "Oh, I know for certain that thy daughter will lovingly receive thee!" "How canst thou know this without knowing her?" says Leir. "I know," says Cordelia, "because not far from here, I had a father who acted towards me as badly as thou hast acted towards her, yet if I were only to see his white head, I would creep to meet him on my knees." "No, this cannot be," says Leir, "for there are no children in the world so cruel as mine." "Do not condemn all for the sins of some," says Cordelia, falling on her knees. "Look here, dear father," she says, "look at me: I am thy loving daughter." The father recognises her and says: "It is not for thee, but for me to beg thy pardon on my knees for all my sins towards thee."

Is there anything approaching this charming scene in Shakespeare's drama?

Strange as the opinion may appear to Shakespeare's devotees, the whole of this older play is in all respects beyond compare better than Shakespeare's adaptation. It is so, first because in it those superfluous characters—the villain Edmund and the unnatural Gloucester and Edgar, who only distract one's attention—do not appear. Secondly, it is free from the perfectly false "effects" of Lear's roaming about on the heath, his talks with the fool, and all those impossible disguises, non-recognitions, and wholesale deaths—above all because in this play there is the simple, natural, and deeply touching character of Leir, and the yet more touching and clearly defined character of Cordelia, which are lacking in Shakespeare. And also because there is in the older drama, instead of Shakespeare's daubed scene of Lear's meeting with

Cordelia and her unnecessary murder, the exquisite scene of Leir's meeting with Cordelia, which is unequalled by anything in Shakespeare's drama.

The older play also terminates more naturally and more in accord with the spectators' moral demands than does Shakespeare's, namely, by the King of the Gauls conquering the husbands of the elder sisters, and Cordelia not perishing, but replacing Leir in his former position.

This is the position as regards the drama we are examining, borrowed from the old play *King Leir*.

It is the same with *Othello,* which is taken from an Italian story, and it is the same again with the famous *Hamlet.* The same may be said of Antony, Brutus, Cleopatra, Shylock, Richard, and all Shakespeare's characters; they are all taken from antecedent works. Shakespeare, taking the characters already given in previous plays, stories, chronicles, or in Plutarch's *Lives,* not only fails to make them more true to life and more vivid, as his adulators assert, but on the contrary always weakens them and often quite destroys them, as in *King Leir:* making his characters commit actions unnatural to them, and making them, above all, talk in a way natural neither to them nor to any human being. So in *Othello,* though this is—we will not say the best, but the least bad—the least overloaded with pompous verbosity, of all Shakespeare's dramas, the characters of Othello, Iago, Cassio, Emilia are far less natural and alive in Shakespeare than in the Italian romance. In Shakespeare Othello suffers from epilepsy, of which he has an attack on the stage. Afterwards in Shakespeare the murder of Desdemona is preceded by a strange vow uttered by Othello on his knees, and besides this, Othello in Shakespeare's play is a negro and not a Moor. All this is unusual, inflated, unnatural, and infringes the unity of the character. And there is none of all this in the romance. In the romance also the causes of Othello's jeal-

ousy are more naturally presented than in Shakespeare. In the romance Cassio, knowing whose the handkerchief is, goes to Desdemona to return it, but when approaching the back door of Desdemona's house he sees Othello coming and runs away from him. Othello perceives Cassio running away, and this it is that chiefly confirms his suspicion. This is omitted in Shakespeare, and yet this casual incident explains Othello's jealousy more than anything else. In Shakespeare this jealousy is based entirely on Iago's machinations, which are always successful, and on his crafty speeches, which Othello blindly believes. Othello's monologue over the sleeping Desdemona, to the effect that he wishes that she when killed should look as she is when alive, and that he will love her when she is dead and now wishes to inhale her "balmy breath" and so forth, is quite impossible. A man who is preparing to murder someone he loves cannot utter such phrases, and still less after the murder can he say that the sun and the moon ought now to be eclipsed and the globe to yawn, nor can he, whatever kind of a nigger he may be, address devils, inviting them to roast him in sulphur, and so forth. And finally, however effective may be his suicide (which does not occur in the romance) it quite destroys the conception of his firm character. If he really suffers from grief and remorse then, when intending to kill himself, he would not utter phrases about his own services, about a pearl, about his eyes dropping tears *"as fast as the Arabian trees their medicinable gum,"* and still less could he talk about the way a Turk scolded a Venetian, and how *"thus"* he punished him for it! So that despite the powerful movement of feeling in Othello, when under the influence of Iago's hints jealousy rises in him, and afterwards in his scene with Desdemona, one's conception of Othello's character is constantly infringed by false pathos and by the unnatural speeches he utters.

So it is with the chief character—Othello. But notwithstanding the disadvantageous alterations it has undergone in comparison with the character from which he is taken in the romance, Othello still remains a character. But all the other personages have been quite spoilt by Shakespeare.

Iago in Shakespeare's play is a complete villain, a deceiver, a thief, and avaricious; he robs Roderigo, succeeds in all sorts of impossible designs, and therefore is a quite unreal person. In Shakespeare the motive of his villainy is, first, that he is offended at Othello not having given him a place he desired; secondly, that he suspects Othello of an intrigue with his wife; and thirdly that, as he says, he feels a strange sort of love for Desdemona. There are many motives, but they are all vague. In the romance there is one motive, and it is simple and clear: Iago's passionate love for Desdemona, changing into hatred of her and of Othello after she had preferred the Moor to him and had definitely repulsed him. Yet more unnatural is the quite unnecessary figure of Roderigo, whom Iago deceives and robs, promising him Desdemona's love and obliging him to do as he is ordered: to make Cassio drunk, to provoke him, and then to kill him. Emilia, who utters anything it occurs to the author to put into her mouth, bears not even the slightest resemblance to a real person.

"But Falstaff, the wonderful Falstaff!" Shakespeare's eulogists will say. "It is impossible to assert that he is not a live person, and that, having been taken out of an anonymous comedy, he has been weakened."

Falstaff, like all Shakespeare's characters, was taken from a play by an unknown author, written about a real person, a Sir John Oldcastle, who was the friend of some Duke. This Oldcastle had once been accused of heresy, but had been saved by his friend the Duke. But afterwards he was condemned and burnt at the stake for his religious beliefs, which

clashed with Catholicism. To please the Roman Catholic public an unknown author wrote a play about Oldcastle, ridiculing this martyr for his faith and exhibiting him as a worthless man, a boon companion of the Duke; and from this play Shakespeare took not only the character of Falstaff but also his own humorous attitude towards him. In the first plays of Shakespeare's in which this character appears he was called Oldcastle; but afterwards, when under Elizabeth Protestantism had again triumphed, it was awkward to mock at this martyr of the struggle with Catholicism, and besides, Oldcastle's relatives had protested, and Shakespeare changed the name from Oldcastle to Falstaff—also an historical character, notorious for having run away at the battle of Agincourt.

Falstaff is really a thoroughly natural and characteristic personage, almost the only natural and characteristic one depicted by Shakespeare. And he is natural and characteristic because, of all Shakespeare's characters, he alone speaks in a way proper to himself. He speaks in a manner proper to himself because he talks just that Shakespearean language, filled with jests that lack humour and unamusing puns, which, while unnatural to all Shakespeare's other characters, is quite in harmony with the boastful, distorted, perverted character of the drunken Falstaff. That is the only reason why this figure really presents a definite character. Unfortunately the artistic effect of the character is spoilt by the fact that it is so repulsive in its gluttony, drunkenness, debauchery, rascality, mendacity, and cowardice, that it is difficult to share the feeling of merry humour Shakespeare adopts towards it. Such is the case with Falstaff.

But in none of Shakespeare's figures is, I will not say his inability but his complete indifference, to giving his people characters so strikingly noticeable as in the case of *Hamlet*, and with no other of Shakespeare's works is the blind worship

of Shakespeare so strikingly noticeable—that unreasoning hypnotism which does not even admit the thought that any production of his can be other than a work of genius, or that any leading character in a drama of his can fail to be the expression of a new and profoundly conceived character.

Shakespeare takes the ancient story—not at all bad of its kind—relating: *avec quelle ruse Amlet qui depuis fût Roy de Dannemarch, vengea la mort de son père Horwendille, occis par Fengon, son frère, et autre occurrence de son histoire,* or a drama that was written on the same theme fifteen years before him; and he writes his play on this subject introducing inappropriately (as he constantly does) into the mouth of the chief character all such thoughts of his own as seem to him worthy of attention. Putting these thoughts into his hero's mouth: about life (the grave-diggers); about death ("To be or not to be"); those he had expressed in his sixty-sixth sonnet about the theatre and about women—he did not at all concern himself as to the circumstances under which these speeches are delivered, and it naturally results that the person uttering these various thoughts becomes a mere phonograph of Shakespeare, deprived of any character of his own; and his actions and words do not agree.

In the legend Hamlet's personality is quite intelligible: he is revolted by the conduct of his uncle and his mother, wishes to be revenged on them, but fears that his uncle may kill him as he had killed his father, and therefore pretends to be mad, wishing to wait and observe all that was going on at court. But his uncle and his mother, being afraid of him, wish to find out whether he is feigning, or is really mad, and send a girl he loves to him. He keeps up his rôle, and afterwards sees his mother alone, kills a courtier who was eavesdropping, and convicts his mother of her sin. Then he is sent to England. He intercepts letters, returns from England, and revenges himself on his enemies, burning them all.

This is all intelligible and flows from Hamlet's character and position. But Shakespeare, by putting into Hamlet's mouth speeches he wished to publish and making him perform actions he needed to secure effective scenes, destroys all that forms Hamlet's character in the legend. Throughout the whole tragedy Hamlet does not do what he might wish to do, but what is needed for the author's plans: now he is frightened by his father's ghost, and now he begins to chaff it, calling it "old mole"; now he loves Ophelia, now he teases her, and so on. There is no possibility of finding any explanation of Hamlet's actions and speeches, and therefore no possibility of attributing any character to him.

But as it is accepted that Shakespeare, the genius, could write nothing bad, learned men devote all the power of their minds to discovering extraordinary beauties in what is an obvious and glaring defect—particularly obvious in Hamlet—namely, that the chief person in the play has no character at all. And, lo and behold, profound critics announce that in this drama, in the person of Hamlet, is most powerfully presented a perfectly new and profound character, consisting in this, that the person has no character; and that in this absence of character lies an achievement of genius—the creation of a profound character! And having decided this, the learned critics write volumes upon volumes, until the laudations and explanations of the grandeur and importance of depicting the character of a man without a character fill whole libraries. It is true that some critics timidly express the thought that there is something strange about this person, and that Hamlet is an unsolved riddle; but no one ventures to say, as in Hans Andersen's story, that the king is naked; that it is clear as day that Shakespeare was unable, and did not even wish, to give Hamlet any character and did not even understand that this was necessary! And learned critics continue to study and praise this enigmatical production,

which reminds one of the famous inscribed stone found by Pickwick at a cottage doorstep,—which divided the scientific world into two hostile camps.

So that neither the character of Lear, nor of Othello, nor of Falstaff, and still less of Hamlet, at all confirms the existing opinion that Shakespeare's strength lies in the delineation of character.

If in Shakespeare's plays some figures are met with that have characteristic traits (mostly secondary figures as Polonius in *Hamlet,* and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*) these few life-like figures—among the five hundred or more secondary figures, and with the complete absence of character in the principal figures—are far from proving that the excellence of Shakespeare's dramas lies in the presentation of character.

That a great mastery in the presentation of character is attributed to Shakespeare arises from his really possessing a peculiarity which, when helped out by the play of good actors, may appear to superficial observers to be a capacity to manage scenes in which a movement of feeling is expressed. However arbitrary the positions in which he puts his characters, however unnatural to them the language he makes them speak, however lacking in individuality they may be, the movement of feeling itself, its increase and change and the combination of many contrary feelings, are often expressed correctly and powerfully in some of Shakespeare's scenes. And this, when performed by good actors, evokes, if but for a while, sympathy for the persons represented.

Shakespeare, himself an actor and a clever man, knew not only by speeches but by exclamations, gestures, and the repetition of words, how to express the state of mind and changes of feeling occurring in the persons represented. So that in many places Shakespeare's characters instead of speaking, merely exclaim, or weep, or in the midst of a monologue indi-

cate the pain of their position by gesture (as when Lear asks to have a button undone), or at a moment of strong excitement they repeat a question several times and cause a word to be repeated which strikes them, as is done by Othello, Macduff, Cleopatra, and others. Similar clever methods of expressing a movement of feeling—giving good actors a chance to show their powers—have often been taken by many critics for the expression of character. But however strongly the play of feeling may be expressed in one scene, a single scene cannot give the character of a person, when, after the appropriate exclamations or gesture, that person begins to talk lengthily not in a natural manner proper to him, but according to the author's whim—uttering things unnecessary and not in harmony with his character.

V

"Well, but the profound utterances and sayings delivered by Shakespeare's characters?" Shakespeare's eulogists will exclaim. "Lear's monologue on punishment, Kent's on vengeance, Edgar's on his former life, Gloucester's reflections on the perversity of fate, and in other dramas the famous monologues of Hamlet, Antony and others?"

Thoughts and sayings may be appreciated, I reply, in prose works, in essays, in collections of aphorisms, but not in artistic dramatic works the aim of which is to elicit sympathy with what is represented. And therefore the monologues and sayings of Shakespeare, even if they contained many very profound and fresh thoughts, which is not the case, cannot constitute the excellence of an artistic and poetic work. On the contrary, these speeches, uttered in unnatural conditions, can only spoil artistic works.

An artistic poetic work, especially a drama, should first of all evoke in reader or spectator the illusion that what the persons represented are living through and experiencing, is be-

ing lived through and experienced by himself. And for this purpose it is not more important for the dramatist to know precisely what he should make his acting characters do and say, than it is to know what he should not make them say and do so as not to infringe the reader's or spectator's illusion. However eloquent and profound they may be, speeeches put into the mouths of acting characters if they are superfluous and do not accord with the situation and the characters, infringe the main condition of dramatic work—the illusion causing the reader or spectator to experience the feelings of the persons represented. One may without infringing the illusion leave much unsaid: the reader or spectator will himself supply what is needed and sometimes as a result of this his illusion is even increased; but to say what is superfluous is like jerking and scattering a statue made up of small pieces, or taking the lamp out of a magic lantern. The reader's or spectator's attention is distracted, the reader sees the author, the spectator sees the actor, the illusion is lost, and to recreate it is sometimes impossible. And therefore without a sense of proportion there cannot be an artist, especially a dramatist. And Shakespeare is entirely devoid of this feeling.

Shakespeare's characters continually do and say what is not merely unnatural to them but quite unnecessary. I will not cite examples of this, for I think that a man who does not himself perceive this striking defect in all Shakespeare's dramas will not be convinced by any possible examples or proofs. It is sufficient to read *King Lear* alone, with the madness, the murders, the plucking out of eyes, Gloucester's jump, the poisonings, and the torrents of abuse—not to mention *Pericles, A Winter's Tale*—or *The Tempest,* to convince oneself of this. Only a man quite devoid of the sense of proportion and taste could produce the types of *Titus Andronicus* and *Troilus and Cressida,* and so mercilessly distort the old drama of *King Leir.*

Gervinus tries to prove that Shakespeare possessed a feeling of beauty, *Schonheit's Sinn,* but all Gervinus's proofs only show that he himself, Gervinus, completely lacked it. In Shakespeare everything is exaggerated: the actions are exaggerated, so are their consequences, the speeches of the characters are exaggerated, and therefore at every step the possibility of artistic impression is infringed.

Whatever people may say, however they may be enraptured by Shakespeare's works, whatever merits they may attribute to them, it is certain that he was not an artist, and that his works are not artistic productions. Without a sense of proportion there never was or could be an artist, just as without a sense of rhythm there cannot be a musician. And Shakespeare may be anything you like—only not an artist.

"But one must not forget the times in which Shakespeare wrote," says his belauders. "It was a time of cruel and coarse manners, a time of the then fashionable euphuism, that is, an artificial manner of speech—a time of forms of life strange to us, and therefore to judge Shakespeare one must keep in view the times when he wrote. In Homer, as in Shakespeare, there is much that is strange to us, but this does not prevent our valuing the beauties of Homer," say the belauders. But when one compares Shakespeare with Homer, as Gervinus does, the infinite distance separating true poetry from its imitation emerges with special vividness. However distant Homer is from us, we can without the slightest effort transport ourselves into the life he describes. And we are thus transported chiefly because, however alien to us may be the events Homer describes, he believes in what he says and speaks seriously of what he is describing, and therefore he never exaggerates and the sense of measure never deserts him. And therefore it happens that, not to speak of the wonderfully distinct, life-like, and excellent characters of Achilles, Hector, Priam, Odysseus, and the eternally touching scenes of

Hector's farewell, of Priam's embassy, of the return of Odysseus, and so forth, the whole of the *Iliad* and particularly the *Odyssey,* is as naturally close to us all as if we had lived and were now living among the gods and heroes. But it is not so with Shakespeare. From his first words exaggeration is seen: exaggeration of events, exaggeration of feeling, and exaggeration of expressions. It is at once evident that he does not believe in what he is saying, that he doesn't need it, that he is inventing the occurrences he describes, is indifferent to his characters, and has devised them merely for the stage, and therefore makes them do and say what may strike his public; and so we do not believe either in the events, or in the actions, or in the sufferings of his characters. Nothing so clearly shows the complete absence of esthetic feeling in Shakespeare, as a comparison between him and Homer. The works which we call the works of Homer, are artistic, poetic, original works, lived through by their author or authors.

But Shakespeare's works are compositions devised for a particular purpose and having absolutely nothing in common with art or poetry.

VI

But perhaps the loftiness of Shakespeare's conception of life is such as, even though he does not satisfy the demands of esthetics, discloses to us so new and important a view of life that in consideration of its value all his artistic defects become unnoticeable. This is indeed what some belauders of Shakespeare say. Gervinus plainly says that besides Shakespeare's significance in the sphere of dramatic poetry, in which in his opinion he is the equal of "Homer in the sphere of the epic; Shakespeare being the greatest judge of the human soul, is a teacher of most indisputable ethical authority, and the most select leader in the world and in life."

In what then does this indubitable authority of the most select teacher in the world and in life consist? Gervinus devotes the concluding chapter of his second volume (some fifty pages) to an explanation of this.

The ethical authority of this supreme teacher of life, in the opinion of Gervinus, consists in the following: "Shakespeare's moral view starts from the simple point," says Gervinus, "that man is born with powers of activity," and therefore, first of all, says Gervinus, Shakespeare regarded it as "an obligation to use our inherent power of action." (As if it were possible for man not to act!) [1]

"Die thatfräftigen Männer, Fortinbras, Bolingbroke, Alcibiades, Octavius spielen hier die gegensätzlichen Rollen gegen die verschiedenen Thatlosen; nicht ihre Charaktere verdienen ihnen Allen ihr Glück und Gedeihen etwa durch eine grosse Ueberlegenheit ihre Natur, sondern trotz ihrer geringern Anlage stellt sich ihre Thatkraft an sich über die Unthätigkeit der Anderen hinaus, gleichviel aus wie schöner Quelle diese Passivität, aus wie schlechter jene Thatigkeit fliesse." [2]

That is to say, that active people like Fortinbras, Bolingbroke, Alcibiades and Octavius, Gervinus informs us, are contrasted by Shakespeare with various characters who do not display energetic activity. And, according to Shakespeare, happiness and success are attained by people who possess this active character, not at all as a result of their superiority of nature. On the contrary, in spite of their inferior talents, their energy in itself always gives them the advantage over the inactive people, no matter whether their inactivity results from excellent impulses, or the activity of the others from base ones. Activity is good, inactivity is evil. Activity

[1] This and the quotations in English that follow are taken from *Shakespeare's Commentaries,* by Dr. G. G. Gervinus, translated by F. G. Bennett, London, 1877.

[2] *Shakespeare,* Von G. G. Gervinus, Leipzig, 1872. Vol. II, pp. 550–51.

transforms evil into good, says Shakespeare, according to Gervinus. "Shakespeare prefers the principle of Alexander to that of Diogenes," says Gervinus. In other words, according to him, Shakespeare prefers death and murder from ambition, to self-restraint and wisdom.[1]

According to Gervinus, Shakespeare considers that humanity should not set itself ideals, but that all that is necessary is healthy activity, and a golden mean in everything. Indeed Shakespeare is so imbued with this wise moderation that, in the words of Gervinus, he even allows himself to deny Christian morality, which makes exaggerated demands on human nature. "How thoroughly penetrated Shakespeare was with this principle of wise moderation," says Gervinus, "is shewn perhaps most strongly in this, that he ventured even to oppose Christian laws which demand an overstraining of human nature; for he approved not that the limits of duty should be extended beyond the intention of nature. He taught therefore the wise and human medium between the Christian and heathen precepts" (p. 917)—a reasonable mean, natural to man, between Christian and pagan injunctions—on the one hand, love of one's enemies, and on the other, hatred of them!

"That it is possible to do too much in good things, is an express doctrine of Shakespeare, both in word and example. . . . Thus excessive liberality ruins Timon, whilst moderate generosity keeps Antonio in honour; the genuine ambition which makes Henry V great overthrows Percy, in whom it rises too high. Exaggerated virtue brings Angelo to ruin; and when in those near him the excess of punishment proves harmful and cannot hinder sin, then mercy, the most God-

[1] Tolstoy's essay *Non-acting* (see *Essays and Letters* in the "World's Classics" series) deals with a controversy that occurred in 1893 between Zola and Dumas In it Tolstoy controverts the opinion that activity in itself, lacking moral guidance, is beneficial.

like gift that man possesses, is also exhibited in its excess, as the producer of sin."

Shakespeare, says Gervinus, taught that one *may do too much good.* He teaches, says Gervinus, "that morality, like politics, is a matter so complicated with relations, conditions of life, and motives, that it is impossible to bring it to final principles" (p. 918).

"In Shakespeare's opinion (and here also he is one with Bacon and Aristotle) there is no positive law of religion or morals which could form a rule of moral action in precepts ever binding and suitable for all cases."

Gervinus most clearly expresses Shakespeare's whole moral theory by saying that Shakespeare does not write for those classes for whom definite religious principles and laws are suitable (that is to say, for 999 out of 1000 of mankind), but for the cultivated, who have made their own a healthy tact in life and such an instinctive feeling as, united with conscience reason and will, can direct them to worthy aims of life. But even for these fortunate ones, in the opinion of Gervinus, this teaching may be dangerous if it is taken incompletely. It must be taken whole. "There are classes," says Gervinus, "whose morality is best provided for by the positive letter of religion and law; but for such as these Shakespeare's writings are in themselves inaccessible; they are only readable and comprehensible to the cultivated, of whom it can be required that they should appropriate to themselves the healthy measure of life, and that self-reliance in which the guiding and inherent powers of conscience and reason, united with the will, are, when consciously apprehended, worthy aims of life" (p. 919). "But even for the cultivated also, Shakespeare's doctrine may not always be without danger. . . . The condition on which his doctrine is entirely harmless is this, that it should be fully and completely received and with-

out any expurging and separating. Then it is not only without danger, but it is also more unmistakable and more infallible, and therefore more worthy of our confidence, than any system of morality can be," (p. 919).

And in order to accept it all, one should understand that according to his teaching it is insane and harmful for an individual to rise against, or "disregard the bonds of religion and the state" (p. 921). For Shakespeare would abhor a free and independent personality who strong in spirit should oppose any law in politics or morals and should disregard the union of the state and religion "which has kept society together for centuries" (p. 921). "For in his opinion the practical wisdom of man would have no higher aim than to carry into society the utmost possible nature and freedom, but for that very reason, and that he might maintain sacred and inviolable the natural laws of society, he would respect existing forms, yet at the same time penetrate into their rational substance with sound criticism, not forgetting nature in civilization, nor, equally, civilization in nature." Property, the family, the state, are sacred. But the aspiration to recognize the equality of man, is insane. "It's realization would bring the greatest harm to humanity" (p. 925).

"No man has fought more strongly against rank and class prejudices, than Shakespeare, but how could his liberal principles have been pleased with the doctrines of those who would have done away with the prejudices of the rich and cultivated, only to replace them with the interests and prejudices of the poor and uncultivated? How would this man, who allures so eloquently to the course of honour, have approved, if in annulling rank, degrees of merit, distinction, we extinguish every impulse to greatness, and by the removal of all degrees, 'shake the ladder to all high designs'? If indeed no surreptitious honour and false power were longer

to oppress mankind, how would the poet have acknowledged the most fearful force of all, the power of barbarity? In consequence of these modern doctrines of equality, he would have apprehended that everything would resolve itself into power; or if this were not the final lot which awaited mankind from these aspirations after equality, if love between nationalities and endless peace were not that 'nothing' of impossibility, as Alonso expresses it in the *Tempest,* but could be an actual fruit of these efforts after equality, then the poet would have believed with this time the old age and decrepitude of the world to have arrived, in which it were worthless to the active to live" (p. 925).

Such is Shakespeare's view of life as explained by his greatest exponent and admirer. Another of the recent belauders of Shakespeare, Brandes, adds the following:

"No one, of course, can preserve his life quite pure from injustice, from deception, and from doing harm to others, but injustice and deception are not always vices, and even the harm done to other people is not always a vice: it is often only a necessity, a legitimate weapon, a right. At bottom, Shakespeare had always held that there were no such things as unconditional duties and absolute prohibitions. He had never, for example, questioned Hamlet's right to kill the King, scarcely even his right to run his sword through Polonius. Nevertheless he had hitherto been unable to conquer a feeling of indignation and disgust when he saw around him nothing but breaches of the simplest moral laws. Now, on the other hand, the dim divinations of his earlier years crystallised in his mind into a coherent body of thought: no commandment is unconditional; it is not in the observance or non-observance of an external fiat that the merits of an action, to say nothing of a character, consists: everything depends upon the volitional substance into which the individual,

as a responsible agent, transmits the formal imperative at the moment of decision." [1]

In other words Shakespeare now sees clearly that the morality of the aim is the only true, the only possible one; so that, according to Brandes, Shakespeare's fundamental principle, for which he is extolled, is that *the end justifies the means*. Action at all costs, the absence of all ideals, moderation in everything, the maintenance of established forms of life, and the maxim that "the end justifies the means."

If one adds to this a Chauvinistic English patriotism, expressed in all his historical plays: a patriotism according to which the English throne is something sacred, the English always defeat the French, slaughtering thousands and losing only scores, Jeanne d'Arc is a witch, Hector and all the Trojons—from whom the English are descended—are heroes while the Greeks are cowards and traitors, and so forth: this is the view of life of the wisest teacher of life according to his greatest admirer. And anyone who reads attentively the works of Shakespeare cannot but acknowledge that the attribution of this view of life to Shakespeare by those who praise him is perfectly correct.

The value of every poetical work depends on three qualities:

1) The content of the work: the more important the content, that is to say, the more important it is for the life of man, the greater is the work.

2) The external beauty achieved by the technical methods proper to the particular kind of art. Thus in dramatic art the technical method will be: that the characters should have a true individuality of their own, a natural and at the same time a touching plot, a correct presentation on the stage of

[1] *William Shakepeare,* by Georges Brandes, translated by William Archer and Miss Morison. London, 1898, p. 921.

the manifestation and development of feelings, and a sense of proportion in all that is presented.

3) Sincerity, that is to say that the author should himself vividly feel what he expresses. Without this condition there can be no work of art, as the essence of art consists in the infection of the contemplator of a work by the author's feeling. If the author has not felt what he is expressing, the recipient cannot become infected by the author's feeling, he does not experience any feeling, and the production cannot be classed as a work of art.

The content of Shakespeare's plays, as is seen by the explanations of his greatest admirers, is the lowest, most vulgar view of life, which regards the external elevation of the great ones of the earth as a genuine superiority; despises the crowd, that is to say, the working classes; and repudiates not only religious, but even any humanitarian, efforts directed towards the alteration of the existing order of society.

The second condition is also absent in Shakespeare except in his handling of scenes in which a movement of feelings is expressed. There is in his works a lack of naturalness in the situations, the characters lack individuality of speech, and a sense of proportion is also wanting, without which such works cannot be artistic.

The third and chief condition—sincerity—is totally absent in all Shakespeare's works. One sees in all of them an intentional artificiality; it is obvious that he is not in earnest but is playing with words.

VII

The works of Shakespeare do not meet the demands of every art, and besides that their tendency is very low and immoral. What then is the meaning of the immense fame these works have enjoyed for more than a hundred years?

To reply to this question seems the more difficult because if the works of Shakespeare had any kind of excellence, the achievement which has produced the exaggerated praise lavished upon them, would at least be to some extent intelligible. But here two extremes meet: works which are beneath criticism, insignificant, empty, and immoral—and insensate, universal laudation, proclaiming these works to be above everything that has ever been produced by man.

How is this to be explained?

Many times during my life I have had occasion to discuss Shakespeare with his admirers, not only with people little sensitive to poetry, but also with those who felt poetic beauty keenly, such as Turgéney, Fet,[1] and others, and each time I have encountered one and the same attitude towards my disagreement with the belaudment of Shakespeare.

I was not answered when I pointed out Shakespeare's defects; they only pitied me for my want of comprehension and urged on me the necessity of acknowledging the extraordinary supernatural grandeur of Shakespeare. They did not explain to me in what the beauties of Shakespeare consist, but were merely indefinitely and exaggeratedly enthusiastic about the whole of Shakespeare, extolling some favourite passages: the undoing of Lear's button, Falstaff's lying, Lady Macbeth's spot which would not wash out, Hamlet's address to the ghost of his father, the "forty thousand brothers," "none does offend, none, I say none," and so forth.

"Open Shakespeare," I used to say to these admirers of his, "where you will or as may chance, and you will see that you will never find ten consecutive lines that are comprehensible, natural, characteristic of the person who utters them, and productive of an artistic impression." (Anyone may make this experiment.) And the belauders of Shake-

[1] A Russian poet of much delicacy of feeling, for many years a great friend of Tolstoy's. He is frequently referred to in my *Life of Tolstoy*.—A. M.

speare opened pages in Shakespeare's dramas by chance, or at their own choice, and without paying any attention to the reasons I adduced as to why the ten lines selected did not meet the most elementary demands of esthetics or good sense, praised the very things that appeared to me absurd, unintelligible, and inartistic.

So that in general in response to my endeavours to obtain from the worshippers of Shakespeare an explanation of his greatness, I encountered precisely the attitude I have usually met with, and still meet, from the defenders of any dogmas accepted not on the basis of reason but in mere credulity. And just this attitude of the belauders of Shakespeare towards him —an attitude which may be met with in all the indefinite, misty articles about Shakespeare, and in conversations about him, gave me the key to an understanding of the cause of Shakespeare's fame. There is only one explanation of this astonishing fame: it is one of those epidemic suggestions to which people always have been and are liable. Such irrational suggestion has always existed, and does exist in all spheres of life. Glaring examples of such suggestion, considerable in scope and deceptiveness, were the mediæval Crusades, which influenced not only adults but also children, and many other epidemic suggestions astonishing in their senselessness, such as the belief in witches, in the utility of torture for the discovery of truth, the search for the elixir of life, for the philosopher's stone, and the passion for tulips valued at several thousand guilders a bulb, which overran Holland. There always have been and always are such irrational suggestions in all spheres of human life—religious, philosophic, economic, scientific, artistic, and in literature generally, and people only see clearly the insanity of such suggestions after they are freed from them. But as long as they are under their influence these suggestions appear to them such undoubted truths that they do not consider it necessary

or possible to reason about them. Since the development of the printing-press these epidemics have become particularly striking.

Since the development of the press it has come about that as soon as, from accidental circumstances, something obtains a special significance, the organs of the press immediately announce this significance. And as soon as the press has put forward the importance of the matter, the public directs yet more attention to it. The hypnotization of the public incites the press to regard the thing more attentively and in greater detail. The interest of the public is still further increased, and the organs of the press, competing one with another, respond to the public demand.

The public becomes yet more interested, and the press attributes yet more importance to the matter; so that this importance, growing ever greater and greater like a snowball, obtains a quite unnatural appreciation, and this appreciation, exaggerated even to absurdity, maintains itself as long as the outlook on life of the leaders of the press and of the public remains the same. There are in our day innumerable examples of such a misunderstanding of the importance of the most insignificant occurrences, occasioned by the mutual reaction of press and public. A striking example of this was the excitement which seized the whole world over the Dreyfus affair. A suspicion arose that some captain on the French staff had been guilty of treason. Whether because this captain was a Jew, or from some special internal party disagreements in French society, this event, which resembled others that continually occur without arousing anyone's attention and without interesting the whole world or even the French military, was given a somewhat prominent position by the press. The public paid attention to it. The organs of the press, vying with one another, began to describe, to analyse, to discuss the event, the public became yet more interested, the

press responded to the demands of the public, and the snowball began to grow and grow, and grew before our eyes to such an extent that there was not a family which had not its disputes about *l'affaire.* So that Caran d'Ache's caricature, which depicted first a peaceful family that had decided not to discuss the Dreyfus affair any more, and then the same family represented as angry furies fighting one another, quite correctly depicted the relation of the whole reading world to the Dreyfus question. Men of other nationalities who could not have any real interest in the question whether a French officer had or had not been a traitor—men moreover who could not know how the affair was going—all divided for or against Dreyfus, some asserting his guilt with assurance, others denying it with equal certainty.

It was only after some years that people began to awaken from the "suggestion" and to understand that they could not possibly know whether he was guilty or innocent, and that each one of them had a thousand matters nearer and more interesting to him than the Dreyfus affair. Such infatuations occur in all spheres, but they are specially noticeable in the sphere of literature, for the press naturally occupies itself most of all with the affairs of the press, and these are particularly powerful in our day when the press has obtained such an unnatural development. It continually happens that people suddenly begin to devote exaggerated praise to some very insignificant works, and then if these works do not correspond to the prevailing view of life suddenly become perfectly indifferent to them and forget both the works themselves and their own previous attitude towards them.

So within my recollection, in the eighteen-forties, there occurred in the artistic sphere the exaltation and laudation of Eugène Sue and George Sand; in the social sphere, of Fourier; in the philosophic sphere, of Comte and Hegel; and in the scientific sphere, of Darwin.

Sue is quite forgotten, George Sand is being forgotten and replaced by the writings of Zola and the Decadents, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Maeterlinck and others. Fourier, with his phalansteries, is quite forgotten, and has been replaced by Karl Marx. Hegel, who justified the existing order, and Comte, who denied the necessity of religious activity in humanity, and Darwin, with his law of struggle for existence, still maintain their places, but are beginning to be neglected and replaced by the teachings of Nietzsche, which though perfectly absurd, unthought-out, obscure, and bad in their content, correspond better to the present-day outlook on life. Thus it sometimes happens that artistic, philosophic, and literary crazes in general, arise, fall rapidly, and are forgotten.

But it also happens that such crazes, having arisen in consequence of special causes accidently favouring their establishment, correspond so well to the view of life diffused in society and especially in literary circles, that they maintain their place for a very long time. Even in Roman times it was remarked that books have their fate, and often a very strange one: failure in spite of high qualities, and enormous undeserved success in spite of insignificance. And a proverb was made: *Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli,* that is, that the fate of books depends on the understanding of those who read them. Such was the correspondence of Shakespeare's work to the view of life of the people among whom his fame arose. And this fame has been maintained, and is still maintained, because the works of Shakespeare continue to correspond to the view of life of those who maintain this fame.

Until the end of the 18th century Shakespeare not only had no particular fame in England, but was estimated less than his contemporaries: Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Beaumont, and others. His fame began in Germany, and from there passed

to England. This happened for the following reason:

Art, especially dramatic art which demands for its realisation extensive preparations, expenditure, and labour, was always religious, that is to say, its object was to evoke in man a clearer conception of that relation of man to God attained at the time by the advanced members of the society in which the art was produced.

So it should be by the nature of the matter, and so it always had been among all nations: among the Egyptians, Hindoos, Chinese, and Greeks—from the earliest time that we have knowledge of the life of man. And it has always happened that, with the coarsening of religious forms, art had more and more diverged from this original aim (which had caused it to be recognised as an important matter—almost an act of worship) and instead of the service of religion, it adopted instead of religious aims worldly aims for the satisfaction of the demands of the crowd, or of the great ones of the earth, that is to say, aims of recreation and amusement.

This deflection of art from its true and high vocation occurred everywhere, and it occurred in Christendom.

The first manifestation of Christian art was in the worship of God in the temples: the performance of Mass and, in general, of the liturgy. When in course of time the forms of this art of divine worship became insufficient, the Mysteries were produced, depicting those events regarded as most important in the Christian religious view of life. Afterwards, when in the 13th and 14th centuries the centre of gravity of Christian teaching was more and more transferred from the worship of Jesus as God, to the explanation of his teaching and its fulfilment, the form of the Mysteries, which depicted external Christian events, became insufficient and new forms were demanded; and as an expression of this tendency appeared the Moralities, dramatic representations in which the

characters personified the Christian virtues and the opposite vices.

But allegories by their very nature, as art of a lower order, could not replace the former religious drama, and no new form of dramatic art corresponding to the conception of Christianity as a teaching of life had yet been found. And dramatic art, lacking a religious basis, began in all Christian countries more and more to deviate from its purpose, and instead of a service of God became a service of the crowd (I mean by "crowd" not merely the common people, but the majority of immoral or non-moral people indifferent to the higher problems of human life). This deviation was helped on by the fact that just at that time the Greek thinkers, poets, and dramatists, with whom the Christian world had not hitherto been acquainted, were re-discovered and favourably accepted. And therefore, not having yet had time to work out for themselves a clear and satisfactory form of dramatic art suitable to the new conception entertained of Christianity as a teaching of life, and at the same time recognising the previous Mysteries and Moralities as insufficient,. the writers of the 15th and 16th centuries, in their search for a new form, began to imitate the newly discovered Greek models, which were attractive by their elegance and novelty. And as it was chiefly the great ones of the earth who could avail themselves of the drama—the kings, princes, and courtiers—the least religious people, not merely quite indifferent to questions of religion but for the most part thoroughly depraved—it followed that to satisfy the demands of its public the drama of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries was chiefly a spectacle intended for depraved kings and for the upper classes. Such was the drama of Spain, England, Italy, and France.

The plays of that time, chiefly composed in all these countries according to ancient Greek models, from poems, legends, and biographies, naturally reflected the national characters.

In Italy what was chiefly elaborated were comedies with amusing scenes and characters. In Spain the worldly drama flourished, with complicated plots and ancient historical heroes. The peculiarity of English drama was the coarse effects produced by murders, executions, and battles on the stage, and popular comic interludes. Neither the Italian, nor the Spanish, nor the English, drama had European fame, and each of them enjoyed success only in its own country. General fame, thanks to the elegance of its language and the talent of its writers, was enjoyed only by the French drama, which was distinguished by strict adherence to the Greek models, and especially to the law of the three Unities.

So matters continued till the end of the 18th century, but at the end of that century this is what happened: in Germany which lacked even mediocre dramatists, (though there had been a weak and little known writer, Hans Sachs), all educated people, including Frederick the Great, bowed down before the French pseudo-classical drama. And yet at that very time there appeared in Germany a circle of educated and talented writers and poets who, feeling the falsity and coldness of the French drama, sought a newer and freer dramatic form. The members of this group, like all the upper classes of the Christian world at that time, were under the charm and influence of the Greek classics and, being utterly indifferent to religious questions, thought that if the Greek drama depicting the calamities, sufferings, and struggles of its heroes supplied the best model for the drama, then for drama in the Christian world such representation of the sufferings and struggles of heroes would also be a sufficient subject, if only one rejected the narrow demands of pseudo-classicism. These men, not understanding that the sufferings and strife of their heroes had a religious significance for the Greeks, imagined that it was only necessary to reject the inconvenient law of the three Unities, and without containing

any religious element corresponding to the beliefs of their own time, the representation of various incidents in the lives of historic personages, and of strong human passions in general would afford a sufficient basis for the drama. Just such a drama existed at that time among the kindred English people and, becoming acquainted with it, the Germans decided that just such should be the drama of the new period.

The masterly development of the scenes, which constitutes Shakespeare's speciality, caused them to select Shakespeare's dramas from among all other English plays which were not in the least inferior, but often superior, to Shakespeare's.

At the head of the circle stood Goethe, who was then the dictator of public opinion on esthetic questions. And he it was—partly from a wish to destroy the fascination of the false French art, partly from a wish to give freer scope to his own dramatic activity, but chiefly because his view of life agreed with Shakespeare's—he it was who acclaimed Shakespeare a great poet. When that falsehood had been proclaimed on Goethe's authority, all those esthetic critics who did not understand art threw themselves upon it like crows upon carrion, and began to search Shakespeare for non-existent beauties, and to extol them. These men, German esthetic critics—for the most part utterly devoid of esthetic feeling, ignorant of that simple direct artistic impression which for men with a feeling for art clearly distinguishes artistic impression from all other, but believing the authority that had proclaimed Shakespeare as a great poet—began to belaud the whole of Shakespeare indiscriminately, selecting passages especially which struck them by their effects or expressed thoughts corresponding to their own view of life, imagining that such effects and such thoughts constitute the essence of what is called art.

These men acted as blind men would if they tried by touch to select diamonds out of a heap of stones they fingered. As

the blind man, long sorting out the many little stones, could finally come to no other conclusion than that all the stones were precious and the smoothest were especially precious, so the esthetic critics, deprived of artistic feeling, could come to no other result about Shakespeare. To make their praise of the whole of Shakespeare more convincing they composed an esthetic theory, according to which a definite religious view of life is not at all necessary for the creation of works of art in general, or for the drama in particular; that for the inner content of a play it is quite enough to depict passions and human characters, that not only is no religious illumination of the matter presented required, but that art ought to be objective, that is to say, it should depict occurrences quite independently of any valuation of what is good or bad. And as this theory was educed from Shakespeare, it naturally happened that the works of Shakespeare corresponded to this theory, and were therefore the height of perfection.

And these were the people chiefly responsible for Shakespeare's fame.

Chiefly in consequence of their writings, the inter-action of writers and the public came about which found expression, and is still expressed, by the insensate belaudment of Shakespeare without any rational basis. These esthetic critics wrote profound treatises about Shakespeare (eleven thousand volumes have been written about him, and a whole science of Shakespeareology has been formulated); the public became more and more interested, and the learned critics explained more and more, that is to say, they added to the confusion and belaudment.

So that the first cause of Shakespeare's fame was that the Germans wanted to oppose something freer and more alive to the French drama of which they were tired, and which was

really dull and cold. The second cause was that the young German writers required a model for their own dramas. The third and chief cause was the activity of the learned and zealous esthetic German critics who lacked esthetic feeling and formulated the theory of objective art, that is to say, deliberately repudiated the religious essence of the drama.

"But," I shall be asked, "what do you mean by the words 'religious essence of the drama'? Is not what you demand for the drama religious instruction, didactics: what is called a tendency—which is incompatible with true art?" By "the religious essence of art," I reply, I mean not an external inculcation of any religious truth in artistic guise, and not an allegorical representation of those truths, but the expression of a definite view of life corresponding to the highest religious understanding of a given period: an outlook which, serving as the impelling motive for the composition of the drama, permeates the whole work though the author is unconscious of it. So it has always been with true art, and so it is with every true artist in general and with dramatists especially. Hence, as happened when the drama was a serious thing, and as should be according to the essence of the matter, he alone can write a drama who has something to say to men—something highly important for them—about man's relation to God, to the universe, to all that is infinite and unending.

But when, thanks to the German theories about objective art, an idea had been established that, for drama, this is not wanted at all, then a writer like Shakespeare who in his own soul had not formed religious convictions corresponding to his period, and who had even no convictions at all, but piled up in his plays all possible events, horrors, fooleries, discussions, and effects, could evidently be accepted as the greatest of dramatic geniuses.

But all these are external reasons: the fundamental inner

cause of Shakespeare's fame was, and is, that his plays fitted *pro captu lectoris,* that is to say responded to the irreligious and immoral attitude of the upper classes of our world.

VIII

A series of accidents brought it about that Goethe at the beginning of the last century, being the dictator of philosophic thought and esthetic laws, praised Shakespeare; the esthetic critics caught up that praise and began to write their long foggy erudite articles, and the great European public began to be enchanted by Shakespeare. The critics, responding to this public interest, laboriously vied with one another in writing fresh and fresh articles about Shakespeare, and readers and spectators were still further confirmed in their enthusiasm, and Shakespeare's fame kept growing and growing like a snowball, until in our time it has attained a degree of insane laudation that obviously rests on no other basis than suggestion.

"There is no one even approximately equal to Shakespeare either among ancient or modern writers." "Poetic truth is the most brilliant gem in the crown of Shakespeare's service." "Shakespeare is the greatest moralist of all times." "Shakespeare displays such diversity and such objectivity as place him beyond the limits of time and nationality." "Shakespeare is the greatest genius that has hitherto existed." "For the creation of tragedies, comedies, historical plays, idylls, idyllic comedies, esthetic idylls, for representation itself as also for incidental verses, he is the only man. He not only wields unlimited power over our laughter and our tears, over all phases of passion, humour, thought and observation, but he commands an unlimited realm of imagination, full of fancy of a terrifying and amazing character, and he possesses penetration in the world of invention and of reality, and over

all this there reigns one and the same truthfulness to character and to nature, and the same spirit of humanity."

"To Shakespeare the epithet of great applies naturally; and if one adds that independently of his greatness he has also become the reformer of all literature, and moreover has expressed in his works not only the phenomena of the life of his time, but also from thoughts and views that in his day existed only in germ has prophetically foreseen the direction which the social spirit would take in the future (of which we see an amazing example in Hamlet)—one may say without hesitation that Shakespeare was not only a great, but the greatest of all poets that ever existed, and that in the sphere of poetic creation the only rival that equals him is life itself, which in his productions he depicted with such perfection."

The obvious exaggeration of this appraisement is a most convincing proof that it is not the outcome of sane thought, but of suggestion. The more insignificant, the lower, the emptier, a phenomenon is, once it becomes the object of suggestion, the more supernatural and exaggerated is the importance attributed to it. The Pope is not only holy, but most holy, and so forth. So Shakespeare is not only a good writer, but the greatest genius, the eternal teacher of mankind.

Suggestion is always a deceit, and every deceit is an evil. And really the suggestion that Shakespeare's works are great works of genius, presenting the climax both of esthetic and ethical perfection, has caused and is causing great injury to men.

This injury is two-fold: first, the fall of the drama and the substitution of an empty immoral amusement for that important organ of progress, and secondly, by the direct degradation of men by presenting them with false models for imitation.

The life of humanity only approaches perfection by the

elucidation of religious consciousness (the only principle securely uniting men one with another). The elucidation of the religious consciousness of man is accomplished through all sides of man's spiritual activity. One side of that activity is art. One part of art, and almost the most important, is the drama.

And therefore the drama, to deserve the importance attributed to it, should serve the elucidation of religious consciousness. Such the drama always was, and such it was in the Christian world. But with the appearance of Protestantism in its broadest sense—that is to say, the appearance of a new understanding of Christianity as a teaching of life—dramatic art did not find a form corresponding to this new understanding of religion, and the men of the Renaissance period were carried away by the imitation of classical art. This was most natural, but the attraction should have passed, and art should have found, as it is now beginning to find, a new form corresponding to the altered understanding of Christianity.

But the finding of this new form was hindered by the teaching, which arose among German writers at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, of the so-called objectivity of art—that is to say, the indifference of art to good or evil—together with an exaggerated praise of Shakespeare's dramas, which partly corresponded to the esthetic theory of the Germans and partly served as material for it. Had there not been this exaggerated praise of Shakespeare's dramas, accepted as the most perfect models of drama, people of the 18th and 19th centuries and of our own, would have had to understand that the drama, to have a right to exist and be regarded as a serious matter, ought to serve, as always was, and cannot but be, the case, the elucidation of religious consciousness. And having understood this

they would have sought a new form of drama corresponding to their religious perception.

But when it was decided that Shakespeare's drama is the summit of perfection, and that people ought to write as he did without any religious or even any moral content—all the dramatists, imitating him, began to compose plays lacking content, like the plays of Goethe, Schiller, Hugo, and, among us Russians, Púshkin, and the historical plays of Ostróvski, Alexéy Tolstóy, and the innumerable other more or less well-known dramatic works which fill all the theatres and are continually produced by anyone to whom the thought and desire to write plays occur.

Only thanks to such a mean petty understanding of the importance of the drama do there appear among us that endless series of dramatic works presenting the actions, situations, characters, and moods of people, not only devoid of any spiritual content but even lacking any human sense. And let not the reader suppose that I exclude from this estimate of contemporary drama the pieces I myself have incidentally written for the theatre. I recognise them, just like all the rest, to be lacking in that religious content which should form the basis of the future drama.

So that the drama, the most important sphere of art, has become in our time merely an empty and immoral amusement for the empty and immoral crowd. What is worst of all is that to the art of the drama, which has fallen as low as it was possible to fall, people continue to attribute an elevated significance, unnatural to it.

Dramatists, actors, theatrical managers, the press—the latter most seriously publishing reports of theatres, operas, and so forth—all feel assured that they are doing something very useful and important.

The drama in our time is like a great man fallen to the

lowest stage of degradation, who yet continues to pride himself on his past, of which nothing now remains. And the public of our time is like those who pitilessly get amusement out of this once great man, now descended to the lowest depths.

Such is one harmful effect of the epidemic suggestion of the greatness of Shakespeare. Another harmful effect of that bepraisement is the setting up of a false model for men's imitation.

If people now wrote of Shakespeare that, for his time, he was a great writer, he managed verse well enough, was a clever actor and a good stage-manager, even if their valuation were inexact and somewhat exaggerated, provided it was moderate, people of the younger generations might remain free from the Shakespearean influence. But when to every young man entering on life in our time are presented as models of moral perfection, not the religious and moral teachers of mankind, but first of all Shakespeare, about whom it is decided and transmitted by learned men from generation to generation as an irrefragible truth that he is the greatest of poets and the greatest of teachers of life, a young man cannot remain free from this harmful influence.

On reading or hearing Shakespeare the question for a young man is no longer whether Shakespeare is good or bad, but only to discover wherein lies that extraordinary esthetic and ethical beauty of which he has received the suggestion from learned men whom he respects, but which he neither sees nor feels. And forcing himself, and perverting his esthetic and ethical feeling, he tries to make himself agree with the prevailing opinion. He no longer trusts himself, but trusts to what learned people, respected by him, have said (I myself have experienced all this). Reading the critical analyses of the plays, and the extracts from books with explanatory commentaries, it begins to seem to him that he

feels something like an artistic impression, and the longer this continues the more is his esthetic and ethical feeling perverted. He already ceases to discriminate independently and clearly between what is truly artistic, and the artificial imitation of art.

But above all, having assimilated that immoral view of life which permeates all Shakespeare's works he loses the capacity to distinguish between good and evil. And the error of extolling an insignificant, inartistic, and not only non-moral but plainly immoral writer, accomplishes its pernicious work.

That is why I think that the sooner people emancipate themselves from this false worship of Shakespeare the better it will be—first because people when they are freed from this falsehood will come to understand that a drama which has no religious basis is not only not an important or good thing, as is now supposed, but is a most trivial and contemptible affair. And having understood this they will have to search for and work out a new form of modern drama—a drama which will serve for the elucidation and confirmation in man of the highest degree of religious consciousness. And secondly, because people, when themselves set free from this hypnotic state, will understand that the insignificant and immoral works of Shakespeare and his imitators, aiming only at distracting and amusing the spectators, cannot possibly serve to teach the meaning of life, but that, as long as there is no real religious drama, guidance for life must be looked for from other sources.

PART XVIII

A TALK ON THE DRAMA.

Reported by I. Teneromo, *ca.* 1907

I RECENTLY had the opportunity of talking with Leo Tolstoy about the theatre.

"What dramas, what heartrending dramas, are being enacted before our eyes: national dramas, class dramas, caste dramas! And the individual drama! Has there ever been a time so full of terrible suffering, of mutual destruction? Only think what has passed before us during these last four years of horror! What a din of battle, what a storm of insurrection, what shrieks of massacres with their heaps of mutilated bodies in the streets, in the fields, and at the bottom of the sea! And now that the noise is past, how many secret executions, secret suicides, and how much secret madness! And in spite of such a plenitude of subjects the stage is impoverished. We have no tragedies, no moving drama, not even a healthy amusing repertoire, no humor . . .

"It is as though life and the drama were made of one piece of dough, and if more is allotted to the one, there remains less for the other. The well-spring of plays for the stage has dried up, and there is only the dull sticky liquid of adaptations left at the bottom.

"Oh, those adaptations! Of course, what will not hunger drive one to invent? But the idea of adaptation is a perfectly childish one. To take a novel, or a story, and rearrange it as a play is like what children do when they cut a figure out of a picture along the outline, stick it to a bit of cardboard, fix it on a stand, and are quite delighted. It stands up, there-

fore it is a statue! A novel or a story is pictorial work: in it the master works with his brush, putting on dabs of paint, producing backgrounds, shadows, half-tones. A play is sculptor's work. One has to work with a chisel: not to put on dabs of paint but to cut out in relief.

"I first understood the wide difference between a novel and a play when I sat down to write my *Power of Darkness*. At first I set to work using a novelist's usual methods, to which I was accustomed. But after the first few pages I found that they were not the right thing here. For instance, on the stage it is impossible to prepare for the important moments lived through by the hero, impossible to make him think and call up memories, or to throw light on his character by referring back to the past: it all comes out dull, forced, and unreal. A ready-formed state of mind, ready-formed resolutions, must be presented to the public. Only soul-images like these—sculptured in relief and in mutual collision—agitate and touch the onlooker.

"It is true I myself could not resist it, and put into *The Power of Darkness* a few monologues; but while doing so I felt it was not the right thing."

The above is taken from *The Life of Tolstoy*, Vol. II, by Aylmer Maude.

c. 1917.

PART XIX

TWO KINDS OF MENTAL ACTIVITY

(The following article was written by Tolstoy to serve as an introduction to a collection of thoughts, aphorisms, and maxims by La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, and Montesquieu, which a friend of Tolstoy's had translated into Russian.)

THE activity of human reason directed to the elucidation of the laws that govern human life has always manifested itself in two different ways. Some thinkers have tried to systematize all the phenomena and laws of human life into definite connection with one another. Such were the originators of all the systems of philosophy, from Aristotle to Spinoza and Hegel.

Others have helped the elucidation of the laws of human life not by elaborating shapely systems but by detached observations and apt expressions indicating the eternal laws that rule our life. Such were the sages of the ancient world who formed collections of aphorisms, the Christian mystic writers, and especially the French writers of the XVIth, XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, who brought this style of writing to the highest degree of perfection.

Such are the thoughts and maxims of La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Pascal, Montesquieu and Vauvenargues, not to mention the wonderful Montaigne, whose writings partly belong to this class.

If we compare all knowledge of the laws of human life to a ball continually enlarged by fresh acquisitions, then thinkers of the first, systematic class should be likened to men who try to enfold the ball with more or less solid and thick stuff in order to enlarge it equally all over. Thinkers of the second category are like men who, disregarding inequalities in the

increase of the surface of different parts of the ball, enlarge it, not all over but at various points of the radii along which their thoughts naturally travel, generally outreaching the thinkers of the first kind and furnishing future systematizers with material to work upon.

The advantages on the side of thinkers of the first category are: coherence, completeness, and symmetry in their doctrines. The disadvantages are: artificiality in their structure, forced connection of the parts, often evident deviations from truth to secure coherence of the whole teaching, and (resulting from this) frequent obscurity and mistiness in the manner of exposition.

The advantages on the side of the second category of thinkers are: directness, sincerity, novelty, boldness, and, as it were, an impulsiveness in their thoughts, a freedom from shackles, and a corresponding vigour of expression. Their disadvantages are: fragmentariness and sometimes external inconsistency—though this latter is usually more apparent than real. Their greatest advantage however is that whereas works of the first class—philosophic systems—often repel by their pedantry or, if they do not repel, weaken the mind of the reader by subduing him and depriving him of independence, books of the second class always attract by their sincerity, elegance, and brevity of expression. Above all, they do not crush the independent activity of the mind but, on the contrary, evoke it by obliging the reader either to deduce further conclusions from what he has read or sometimes, when he quite disagrees with the author, to contest his positions and thus arrive at new and unexpected conclusions.

Of this kind are the detached thoughts both of ancient and modern writers generally, and such are the thoughts of the French writers whose maxims are collected in the work before us.

1908.

PART XX

PREFACE TO N. ORLOV'S ALBUM OF "RUSSIAN PEASANTS"

Tolstoy willingly called attention to pictures, as well as to stories, of which he approved; and he was particularly ready to do so if the artists' subject was one that might interest the peasants, for whom he considered that artists have done too little.

Work such as Orlóv's (himself of peasant origin) which, by the disapproval it showed of the Government's treatment of the peasants, involved risk to the artist, was specially calculated to attract his sympathy.

"Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body." (Matt. X. 28.)

The publication of Orlóv's pictures in album form is an excellent thing. Orlóv is my favourite artist because the subject of his pictures is my favourite subject—the Russian people: the real Russian peasant-people, not that people which vanquished Napoleon and conquered and subdued other nations, not that people which unfortunately has so quickly learnt to make machines, railways, and revolutions as well as Parliaments with all conceivable sub-divisions of parties and tendencies, but that meek, hard-working, Christian, gentle, much-enduring people which has reared and bears on its shoulders all those who now torture and diligently corrupt it.

And what Orlóv and I love in these people is one and the same thing: namely, the meek, patient peasant-soul, enlightened by true Christianity, which promises so much to those who can understand it.

In all Orlóv's pictures I see that soul, which like the soul of a child retains all possibilities and above all the possibil-

ity (while avoiding the depravity of western civilization) of following the Christian path which alone can lead Christendom out of that enchanted circle of sufferings in which, with torment to themselves, men now incessantly revolve.

Here in a smoky hut on a bed of straw lies a dying woman. A burning taper has, according to custom, been placed in her hands which are already growing cold. Near her, in solemn submissive calm, stands her husband; and by his side, in a coarse smock (her only garment), stands their eldest daughter, a thin little girl, crying. Beside a rude cradle, hanging from the ceiling, the grandmother soothes a crying infant. Neighbours stand talking near the door.

This picture evokes in me a wonderful and elevating feeling of tender pity and also, strange as it may seem to say so, a feeling of envy of that holy poverty and of the attitude towards it here revealed.

The same elevating feeling of consciousness of the vast spiritual strength of the people to whom not by my life but by my race I have the good fortune to belong, is produced in me by two other pictures of similar character, which always move me profoundly— *The Emigrants* and *The Soldier's Return.*

Apart from the fact that the departure of the emigrants, who are saying good-bye to those they are leaving behind, is important in its subject-matter (showing us as it does in vivid images what, in spite of the difficulties placed in their way by the Government and the landowners, the Russian people are accomplishing: populating and cultivating enormous tracts of country), this picture is rendered particularly touching not merely by the wonderful old man in the foreground, but by all the figures, full of movement and life, excited by the thoughts of departure or doubtful at being left behind.

The Soldier's Return is a picture I am particularly

fond of. Having pined for years far from home in hard army service uncongenial to his soul, Pahóm or Sídor, a dutiful son, a loving husband and a good worker, has at last struggled back to liberty and home. And what does he find there? He has already heard the news before he reached his hut. During his absence his Matrëna has had a baby.

This is their first meeting: the wife kneels before her husband, and the child—the evidence of her fault—is also there. The mother-in-law is egging on her son (woman's way) and telling how she had said, "Mind, Matrëna, your husband will return. . . ." But the old father, still filled with that Christian spirit of forgiveness and love by which the best representatives of the Russian people have lived and still live, interrupts the old woman's shrill speech and reminds them of that which settles all accounts and wipes out all offences and all anger: he reminds them of God—and all reckonings are at an end, all tangles straightened out.

However painful it may be to the son, however hurt he may feel, however he may have wished to avenge his shame on his wife, he is his father's son and the same divine spirit lives in him: the spirit of mercy, forgiveness and love; and this spirit—so alien to the uniform he wears—awakes within him, and he waves his hand and experiences the touching joy of forgiveness. "God will forgive you! Rise, Matrëna, that will do!"

The other six pictures are equally important and beautiful. I have separated these six from the three first only because, besides the traits common to them all, in these six are vividly depicted the temptations and depraving influences against which the Christian soul of the Russian people has to contend and does contend, and by which it has not been subdued.

These pictures are peculiarly attractive in that they depict the struggle without deciding whose the victory will be. Will the whole people follow the path of spiritual and mental de-

"THE RETURN FROM WORK"

The Tax Collector in a Peasant's Hut

By N. Orlóv

pravity along which the so-called educated classes, wishing to make it like themselves, invite it, or will it hold to the Christian principles by which it has lived, and, in a vast majority of cases, still lives?

(*See illustration facing this page.*) A picture of this kind is the one in which a village Elder—who has come to collect taxes from a poor man just returned from wage-work carried on far from home—is standing over the man awaiting an answer. Only the old father gives that answer, regardless of all consideration of the needs of the Government, speaking of God, and the sin of exploiting a worker barely able to support his family. Very pathetic in this picture, besides the master of the house, are the mistress who stands by the table on which she has just spread a meal, from which everyone has been torn away, and the child who gazes perplexed and full of sympathy at his excited grandfather.

Of similar kind are the remaining pictures of the series, which depict a struggle between good and evil in which men of the people, partly or completely depraved, side with evil.

Such is the picture *Arrears of Taxes,* depicting the sale of a poor widow's cow—the support of her children. A rich peasant money-lender is buying, and the District Elder is selling, the cow, while the Village Elder notes down the transaction.

Similar pictures are the one, full of matter, in which a poor widow who lives by the illicit sale of vodka (thereby diminishing the State revenue) is caught in the act; and *No. 7* (*see next page*), which depicts the consecration of one of the vodka-shops which are now (1908) a Government monopoly. This picture is specially remarkable for its technique, for the delicacy and exactitude with which the ideas are expressed, and for the accuracy of its types.

Yet another such picture is the one with the revolting theme, *Corporal Punishment.*

Besides a true portrayal of the still unperverted Russians, which is the chief subject of the whole series, in all these last six pictures, types are shown of that already depraved part of the nation which wishes, for its own profit, to pervert its still unperverted brothers.

The Village Elder who is collecting taxes from the man whose payments are in arrear has not yet broken all links uniting him to his fellows, and evidently suffers for his fellow-man as well as from his own participation in the cause of that suffering.

But the over-fed District Elder in the picture in which the cow is being taken, no longer feels any remorse at fulfilling his cruel duty, and the usurer buying the cow has no consideration for anything but his own profit. In the picture of the illicit vodka-seller, the policeman and the District Elder and the clerk are performing their task unbashed, and they even admire the cleverness of the man in disguise who has trapped the vodka-seller. Only the old man, a representative of the soul of the Russian people, disturbs the general complacency by his bold words.

In the picture of *The Monopoly,* besides the fat publican grieved at the loss of his business, the peasant crossing himself before the icon with evident hypocrisy is very striking, and so is the tattered fellow who has pushed inopportunely in at the door of the institution which has brought him to his present condition, and has so successfully corrupted—and continues for the State's profit to corrupt—a large part of the population.

Again in the picture of *Corporal Punishment,* all those present, except the old man who is praying for the sins of men, and the little boy aghast at man's cruelty, have reached the point at which they can regard their shameful deeds as necessary duties.

The last picture, expressing all that is said in the final six

"THE MONOPOLY"

The Consecration of a State Vodka Shop
By N. Orlóv

of the series, is particularly powerful and dreadful in that it shows in the simplest and most comprehensible way what lies at the bottom of the demoralization to which the people are subjected, and the chief danger that faces them.

"Go, go! God will help you!" says the girl, refusing to give to the beggar. "You see, his Reverence is here!"

Yes, it is a terrible picture!

The strength of a nation lies in the degree of truth in that religious understanding of the laws of life which guides its actions. I say the degree of truth, for a complete understanding of God is never possible to man. Man can but draw ever nearer and nearer to the one and the other. And the greatest amount of true religious understanding of life in our days has been and still is to be found among the illiterate, wise and holy Russian peasant-population. And in all kinds of ways: by Law Courts, taxation, conscription, and alcoholic poisoning for revenue's sake, they are surrounded by terrible temptations, and the most awful of these is the religious fraud which claims greater importance for the Church and its ministers than for mercy and brotherly love.

All this is presented in Orlóv's pictures, and so I think that I am not wrong in loving them.

These pictures show us the danger now menacing the spiritual life of the Russian people. And to realize a danger that was not noticed before is a step towards averting it.

1908.

APPENDIX

DARLING

By Antón Chékhov

Olenka, the daughter of a retired civil servant, Plemyánnikov, sat musing in her back porch. It was hot, the flies were pertinaciously teasing, and it was pleasant to reflect that it would soon be evening. Dark rain-clouds were coming up from the east and bringing with them an occasional whiff of moisture.

In the middle of the courtyard Kúkin, who lived in a small house in the same courtyard and was manager and proprietor of the Tivoli Gardens, stood looking at the sky.

"Again!" he exclaimed despairingly. "It's going to rain again! Rain every day, every day, as though to spite me. One might as well hang oneself! It's ruination! Fearful losses every day!"

He raised and clasped his hands in despair, and turning to Olenka continued:

"There, Olenka Semënovna, that's the life we lead. It's enough to make one cry. One works, tries hard, wears oneself out, gets no sleep at night, and racks one's brains what to do for the best—and what's the result? On the one hand there's the ignorant boorish public! I give them the very best operetta, a fairy-like masque, splendid comic singers, but is that what they want? Do you suppose they understand anything of all that? What they want is what is given in a booth at a fair! Trash, is what they demand! On the other hand, look at the weather! Rain almost every evening.

As it started on the 10th May, so it went on the whole of May and June. It's simply awful! The public don't come, but I have to pay the rent and the artistes!"

Next evening the clouds again began to gather, and Kúkin said with an hysterical laugh:

"Well, what of it? Rain away! Let it flood the whole garden with me in it! Let me have no luck in this world or the next! Let the artistes take proceedings against me! What is a trial? Even if I go as a convict to Siberia! Or to the scaffold! Ha, ha, ha!"

The next day it was the same again.

Olenka listened to Kúkin silently and seriously, and sometimes tears came into her eyes. In the end Kúkin's misfortunes touched her and she came to love him. He was short and lean, with a sallow complexion, twists of hair were curled on his temples, he spoke in a thin tenor voice, and when he spoke his mouth twisted, and his face always expressed despair, but still he aroused in her a real and profound affection. She always loved someone and could not exist without it. Formerly she had loved her papa, who now sat in an armchair in a dark room, ill, and breathing with difficulty; she loved her aunt, who sometimes—once in two years—came from Byansk; and before that, when she was at the secondary school, she had loved her French master. She was a quiet, soft-hearted, compassionate young woman, with a mild tender look in her eyes and very good health. At the sight of her plump rosy cheeks, her soft white neck with a dark little mole on it, and the kind naïve smile which appeared on her face when she listened to anything pleasant, men thought, "Yes, she's all right," and smiled too, and lady-visitors could not refrain from suddenly seizing her hand in the middle of a conversation and exclaiming with a gush of delight: "You darling!"

The house in which she had lived since her birth and

which had been left her in her father's will, was on the outskirts of the town in the Gipsy Suburb, not far from the Tivoli Gardens. In the evenings and at night she could hear the band playing and rockets going off with a bang in the Gardens, and it seemed to her that Kúkin was fighting his fate and taking his chief foe, the indifferent public, by assault: her heart melted tenderly, she had no wish to sleep, and when he returned home towards morning she tapped softly at her bedroom window and, letting him see only her face and one shoulder through the curtains, gave him a friendly smile.

He proposed, and they were married. And when he had a good view of her neck and her plump healthy shoulders, he threw up and clasped his hands and said: "Darling!"

He was happy but, as it rained on their wedding day and the whole of the following night, the despairing expression never left his face.

After the wedding they lived happily together. She sat in his booking-office, saw that the Tivoli Gardens were in order, entered up the accounts and paid the salaries; and her rosy cheeks, her sweet naïve smile, shining like a halo, appeared now at the window of the booking-office, now behind the scenes, now at the refreshment-bar. And she began to tell her acquaintances that the theatre was the most remarkable, most important, and most necessary thing in the world—that only at the theatre could one obtain true pleasure and become cultivated and humane.

"But do you think the public understands that?" she said. "They want a common booth! Yesterday we put on 'Faust Inside Out,' and almost all the boxes were empty, but if Vánichka and I were to give some common trash, believe me the theatre would be packed. To-morrow Vánichka and I are giving 'Orpheus in Hell'; mind you come!" And what Kú-

kin said about the theatre and the actors she repeated; she despised the public as he did, for their indifference to art and their ignorance; she took part in the rehearsals, corrected the actors, kept an eye on the behaviour of the musicians, and when the local paper criticised their theatre unfavourably she cried, and afterwards went to the newspaper office for explanations.

The actors were fond of her and called her "Vánichka and I," and "the Darling." She was sorry for them and used to lend them small sums, and if it happened that they did not pay her, she cried in secret, but made no complaint to her husband.

And in the winter they got on quite well. They took a theatre in the town for the whole winter and sub-let it for short periods, now to an Ukrainian troupe, now to a conjuror, now to a local dramatic company. Olenka grew plumper and was all beaming with pleasure, but Kúkin grew thinner and sallower and complained of terrible losses, though business had not been bad all winter. He used to cough at night, and she gave him raspberry or lime-blossom tea, rubbed him with eau-de-Cologne, and wrapped him up in her soft shawls.

"What a splendid dear you are!" she said, quite sincerely, smoothing his hair. "What a good-looking pet you are!"

In Lent he went to Moscow to gather a troupe, and without him she could not sleep, but sat by the window looking at the stars. She compared herself, at the time, to the hens who keep awake all night and are restless when the cock is not in the hen-house. Kúkin was detained in Moscow and wrote that he would return for Easter, and his letters already contained arrangements about the Tivoli Gardens. But on the Monday in Passion Week, late in the evening, an ominous knock was suddenly heard at the gate; someone was

hammering at the gate as if on a barrel: boom, boom, boom! The sleepy cook, splashing with her bare feet through the puddles, ran to open the gate.

"Open for goodness' sake!" said someone in a thick bass voice. "There's a telegram for you!"

Olenka had received telegrams from her husband before, but this time for some reason she grew quite faint. She opened the telegram with trembling hands, and read as follows:

"Iván Kúkin passed away to-day suddenly pasway awaiting instructions fuferal Tuesday."

It was typed "fuferal" in the telegram, and there was also the incomprehensible word 'pasway.' The signature was that of the manager of an operatic troupe.

"My precious!" sobbed Olenka. "Vánichka, my dearest, my precious. Why did I ever meet you? Why did I ever know and love you? Whom have I left? Why have you deserted your poor, unfortunate Olenka?"

Kúkin was buried on Tuesday in the Vagánkov cemetery in Moscow. Olenka returned home on Wednesday and as soon as she entered her house she fell on her bed and sobbed so loud that she could be heard in the street and in the neighbouring houses.

"The darling!" said the neighbours, as they crossed themselves. "Darling Olga Semënovna, how she does take on!"

Three months later Olenka was returning from Mass, melancholy and in deep mourning. It happened that a neighbour, Vasíli Andréich Pusloválov, who was also returning from church, walked beside her. He was manager of the merchant Babakáev's timber-yard. He wore a straw hat, a white waistcoat and a gold watch-chain, and looked more like a squire than a tradesman.

"Everything has its own order, Olga Semënovna," he said gravely, in a tone of sympathy, "and if any one of those near

us dies, it must be that God willed it so, and so we must not forget ourselves but must bear it submissively."

Having accompanied Olenka to the gate he took his leave of her and went on. All day after that she seemed to hear his dignified voice, and whenever she closed her eyes she saw his dark beard. He pleased her very much. And apparently she had also made an impression on him, for shortly afterwards an elderly lady with whom she was but slightly acquainted came to drink coffee with her, and as soon as she was seated at the table began to talk about Pustoválov and say what a good and reliable man he was, whom anyone would be glad to marry. Three days after that, Pustoválov himself came to call on her; he did not stay long, not more than ten minutes, and did not say much, but Olenka fell in love with him, so much in love that as if she were in a fever she did not sleep all night, and in the morning she sent for the elderly lady. The match was soon arranged, and then came the wedding.

Pustoválov and Olenka lived happily after their marriage. He was usually in the timber-yard till dinner and then went out on business, and Olenka took his place and sat in the office till the evening, writing out accounts and despatching goods.

"Now timber rises twenty per cent in price every year," she said to customers and acquaintances. "Just think, we used to sell local timber, but now Vánichka has to go to Mogilév province every year to buy timber. And the freights!" she went on, covering both her cheeks with her hands in horror, "what freights!"

She felt as if she had dealt in timber quite a long time; that the most important and most necessary thing in life was timber; and there was something intimate and touching to her in the words: "balk, joist, pole, plank, scantling, batten, beam. . . ."

At night when she slept, she dreamed of whole mountains of planks and boards, and long unending rows of carts conveying timber to distant places beyond the town. She dreamed of how a whole regiment of twenty-eight foot, nine-inch beams was marching on end to attack the timber-yard; joists, beams and boards knocked against one another with a resounding crash of dry wood, all falling down and rising again, piling themselves on one another. Olenka cried out in her sleep and Pustoválov said tenderly: "Olenka, what's the matter, darling? Cross yourself!"

Her husband's thoughts were hers too. If he thought the room too hot, or business slack, she thought so too. Her husband did not care for any entertainments and stayed at home on holidays, and so did she.

"You are always at home or in the office," her acquaintances said to her. "You should go to the theatre, darling, or the circus."

"Vánichka and I have no time to go to theatres," she answered sedately. "We are hard-working people and have no time for trifling. What good are those theatres?"

On Saturdays Pustoválov and she went to evening service, on holidays to early service, and they returned from church side by side with a softened expression on their faces, both diffusing an agreeable perfume, and her silk dress rustling pleasantly. At home they had tea with fancy bread and different kinds of jam, and then cake. Every day at noon an appetising smell of beet-root soup and roast mutton or duck, or on fast days of fish, was noticeable in their yard and in the street outside, and one could not pass their gate without beginning to feel an appetite. In the office a samovar was always boiling, and customers were treated to tea and biscuits. Once a week the couple went to the baths and returned from there together, both red in the face.

"Yes, we get on all right," Olenka used to say. "Thank

heaven! God grant everyone a life such as Vánichka's and mine."

When Pustoválov went to the Mogilév province to buy timber she was much depressed and lay awake at night, crying. Sometimes in the evening the regimental veterinary surgeon, Smírnin, who rented their lodge, used to come to see her. He would tell her some news, or play cards with her, and that distracted her a little. She was specially interested in what he told her of his own family life: he was married and had a boy, but was separated from his wife because she had been unfaithful to him, and now he hated her but sent her forty roubles a month for his son's maintenance. As she listened to this Olenka sighed, shook her head, and felt sorry for him.

"Well, God be with you," she would say when he took his leave, and as she lighted him with a candle to the staircase. "Thank you for sharing my dullness. May the Queen of Heaven grant you good health!"

She always expressed herself thus sedately and sagaciously, imitating her husband, and when the veterinary surgeon was already disappearing beyond the door below, she would call after him:

"Do you know, Vladímir Platónych, you should make it up with your wife. Forgive her, if only for your son's sake! The little boy no doubt understands."

And when Pustoválov returned she told him in a low voice about the veterinary surgeon and his unhappy family life, and they both sighed, shook their heads, and spoke of the boy who no doubt pined for his father, and then, by some strange sequence of ideas, they went up to the icons, bowed to the ground, and prayed that God would send them children.

So the Pustoválovs lived quietly and peaceably in love and full accord for six years. But then one winter Pustoválov at the timber-yard went out without his cap, after drinking hot tea, to send off some timber, and caught cold and fell ill. He

was treated by the best doctors, but got worse, and died after four months' illness. And Olenka was again a widow.

"Whom have I now that you have forsaken me, my precious?" she sobbed, after she had buried her husband. "How am I to live without you, grief-stricken and wretched! Pity me, good people, utterly forlorn. . . ."

She wore a black dress with weepers, gave up hats and gloves for good, and hardly ever went out except to go to church and to her husband's grave, and at home she lived like a nun. It was only after six months had passed that she left off the weepers and opened the shutters of the windows. She was sometimes seen going to market with her cook to buy provisions, but how she now lived, and what went on in her house, could only be conjectured. People made conjectures, for instance, from seeing her drinking tea in her little garden with the veterinary surgeon, who read the newspaper aloud to her, and also from the fact that, meeting a lady she knew at the post-office, she had said to her:

"There is no regular veterinary inspection in our town, and therefore there is much illness. One is always hearing of people falling ill from the milk, and being infected by cows and horses. The health of domestic animals should really be looked after as carefully as the health of human beings."

She repeated the veterinary's thoughts and was now of his opinion about everything. It was clear that she could not live a year without some attachment and had found her new happiness in the lodge of her own house.

Another would have been censured for this, but no one could think ill of Olenka; everything she did was so natural. The veterinary surgeon and she never spoke to anybody about the change in their relations to one another, and they tried to conceal it, but did not succeed in this, for Olenka could have no secrets. When visitors, his comrades in the service, came to see him, she while pouring out the tea or serving supper

would begin to speak about cattle-plague, or bovine tuberculosis and municipal slaughter-houses, while he would become dreadfully confused, and after the visitors had gone would seize her hand and hiss angrily:

"Didn't I ask you not to speak of what you don't understand? When we veterinaries talk among ourselves, please don't join in. It's really annoying!"

And she would look at him with amazement and agitation and would ask:

"Volódichka dear, what am I to speak about?"

And she would embrace him and with tears in her eyes entreat him not to be angry, and they would both be happy.

That happiness however did not last long. The veterinary left with his regiment and left for good, as the regiment was ordered to some very distant place, perhaps to Siberia. And Olenka was left alone.

She was entirely alone now. Her father had died long ago, and his armchair lay covered with dust and with a leg broken off, in the garret. She grew thinner and paler and people she met in the street no longer looked at her as they used to do; it was evident that her best years were over and left behind, and that a new unknown life was beginning about which it was better not to think. In the evenings she sat in her porch and could hear the music playing and the rockets bursting in the Tivoli Gardens, but they did not now awaken any thought in her. She looked indifferently at her empty yard, thought of nothing, wished for nothing, and afterwards when night came on she went to sleep, and saw in her dreams the empty yard. She ate and drank as if unwillingly.

But the principal thing and the worst of all was that she no longer had any opinions whatever. She saw the objects around her, and understood all that took place, but could form no opinions and did not know what to speak about.

And how awful it is not to have any opinions! One sees, for instance, how a bottle is standing, or rain falling, or a peasant is driving his cart, but what the bottle, or rain, or peasant, is for, what sense there is in them, you can't say—not even if someone gave you a thousand roubles to do so.

While she had Kúkin, Pustoválov, and afterwards the veterinary surgeon Olenka was able to explain everything and express her opinions about anything you liked; but now there was the same void in her mind and heart as in her yard. And it was harsh and bitter as wormwood in the mouth.

The town was gradually expanding on all sides; the Gipsy Suburb was now called a street, and where the Tivoli Gardens and the timber-yard had been, houses had sprung up, and several side streets had formed. How fast time flies! Olenka's house had grown dingy, the roof had rusted, the outhouse had a slant to one side, and the whole yard was overgrown with docks and stinging nettles. Olenka herself had grown elderly and plain; in summer she sat in the porch, and her soul as before was empty, oppressed, and savoured of wormwood; in winter she sat at a window looking at the snow. When there was a scent of spring, or the wind brought the sound of the church bells, a flood of memories from the past would well up, her heart would contract with tender emotion and tears would flow freely from her eyes, but this was only for a moment, then again emptiness returned and she did not know why she lived. Brýska, her black cat, would rub against her softly and purr, but these feline caresses did not touch Olenka. Were they what she needed? She wanted a love that would absorb her whole being, her whole soul and reason, would give her ideas and a purpose in life, and would warm her ageing blood. And she brushed away black Brýska, and told her crossly:

"Get away . . . you've no business here!"

And so she went on day after day, year after year, without a single joy, and without any opinions. Whatever Martha the cook said, that was right.

Towards the evening of a very hot July day, just as the town herd of cows was being driven through the streets and the whole yard was filled with clouds of dust, someone suddenly knocked at the gate. Olenka went herself to open it and was dumbfounded by what she saw: at the gate stood the veterinary Smírnin, now grey-haired and in civilian dress. She suddenly remembered everything, could not restrain herself, began crying, and let her head fall on his breast without saying a word, and in her great excitement did not notice how they both entered the house and sat down to tea.

"My dearest!" she muttered, trembling with joy. "Vladímir Platónych! From where has heaven sent you?"

"I want to settle here for good," he told her. "I have left the army, and want to try my luck as a free man, and to live a settled life. Besides it is time to send my son to the high school. He's a big boy. Do you know, I have made it up with my wife."

"And where is she?" asked Olenka.

"She is at the hotel with our son, and I am hunting round looking for a lodging."

"Oh goodness, my dear soul, take my house! What's wrong with it? Oh, Lord, why, I won't charge you anything," said Olenka, excitedly, and again began to cry. "You live here, and the lodge will do well for me. What joy, oh, my goodness!"

Next day the roof of the house was already being painted and the wall whitewashed, and Olenka, her arms akimbo, went about the yard giving directions. The old smile beamed on her face and she was fresh and full of life again, as though she had waked up from a long sleep. The veterinary's wife arrived—a thin, plain lady with short hair and a

peevish face, and with her came the boy, Sásha, small for his age (he was going on for ten), plump, with clear blue eyes and dimples in his cheeks. Scarcely had the boy entered the yard before he rushed after the cat, and his merry joyous laughter immediately filled the air.

"Auntie, is this your cat?" he asked Olenka. "When she pups let me have a kitten. Mama is awfully afraid of mice."

Olenka talked to him, gave him tea, and her heart suddenly grew warm and contracted tenderly, just as if he were her own son. And in the evening, when he sat down in her dining-room and prepared his lessons, she looked at him with emotion and pity and whispered:

"My pretty one, my precious . . . , my little child! Fancy your being born so clever and so fair!"

"An island is a portion of dry land surrounded on all sides by water," he read.

"An island is a portion of dry land . . . " she repeated, and that was the first opinion she expressed with conviction after so many years of silence and absence of thought.

And she already had opinions of her own, and at supper she spoke to Sásha's parents of how difficult it was for children nowadays to learn in the high-schools, but that a classical high-school education was, all the same, better than a commercial one, as after finishing at the high-school all careers were open to you, whether you wished to be a doctor or an engineer.

Sásha began going to the high-school. His mother went to stay with her sister in Khárkov, and did not return; his father went away somewhere every day to inspect herds of cattle, and would sometimes be away from home for three days at a time; it seemed to Olenka that they had quite abandoned Sásha, that he was not wanted at home, that he was being starved, and she took him to her lodge and arranged a little room there for him.

Half-a-year has already passed now since Sásha came to live in her lodge. Every morning Olenka comes into his room; he is fast asleep with his hand under his cheek, scarcely breathing. She is sorry to wake him.

"Sáshenka," she would say sadly, "get up, dear! Time to go to school."

He gets up, dresses, says his prayers, and then sits down to breakfast. He drinks three tumblers of tea and eats two big plain cakes and half a French roll with butter. He is not quite awake yet, and therefore not in a good temper.

"But, Sáshenka, you did not quite learn your fable," Olenka says, gazing at him as if she was seeing him off on a long journey. "I am troubled about you. You must take pains to learn, dearest . . . and obey your masters."

"Oh, do leave me alone!" says Sásha.

When he goes along the street to school, himself small but wearing a big cap and with a satchel on his back, Olenka follows him noiselessly.

"Sáshenka!" she calls.

He turns round and she slips a date or a caramel into his hand. When they turn into the side street where the school stands he feels ashamed of being followed by a tall, stout woman; he looks round and says:

"You go home, auntie; I can go on alone now."

She stops, and follows him with her eyes fixedly until he disappears into the school doorway. Oh, how she loves him! Not one of her former attachments had been so deep, never before had her soul surrendered itself so freely, so disinterestedly, and so joyously, as it did now when the maternal feelings grew more and more ardent within her. For this boy, who was not hers, for the dimples in his cheeks, for his peaked cap, she would have laid down her life, given it gladly and with tears of emotion. Why? Who can tell why?

Having seen Sásha to school she returns home quietly, so

content, serene, and full of love. Her face, which has grown younger-looking during the last half-year, is smiling and radiant, those she meets look at her with pleasure, and say:

"Good morning, Olga Semënovna, darling! How are you, darling?"

"The work at the high-school is very difficult nowadays," she relates when she goes marketing. "It's no joke,—in the first class yesterday they had a fable to learn by heart, a Latin translation, and a sum as well. . . . How is a little fellow to do it all?"

And she begins talking about teachers, lessons, and the lesson-books, saying just what Sásha says about them.

After two o'clock they dine together, and in the evening they do Sásha's home work and cry together. When tucking him up in bed, she spends a long time making the sign of the cross over him and whispering a prayer; then, when she goes to bed, she dreams of the dim and distant future when Sásha, having finished the course and become a doctor or an engineer, will have a big house of his own with a carriage and horses, and will marry, and children will be borne to him. . . . She falls asleep still thinking of the same thing, and the tears roll down her cheeks from under her closed eyelids. The black cat lies at her side and purrs. "Prr . . . prr . . . prr . . . "

Suddenly there is a loud knock at the gate. Olenka wakes up breathless with fear, and her heart beats violently. Half-a-minute passes and the knocking is repeated.

"It's a telegram from Khárkov," she thinks, beginning to tremble all over. "His mother demands that Sásha should be sent to her in Khárkov. . . . Oh, God!"

She is in despair. Her head, her feet and hands, grow cold; there is nobody in the world more unhappy than she. But another minute passes, voices are heard: it is the veterinary surgeon returning from the club.

"Well, thank God!" she thinks.

The weight is gradually lifted from her heart, and it feels light again. She lies down and thinks about Sásha, who is fast asleep in the next room and sometimes mutters in his dream:

"I'll give it you! Be off! Don't fight!"

THE END

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